ESSAYS

AND

LETTERS

ON THE

Moſt important and intereſting

SUBJECTS,

By J. YONGE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
Printed for J. Bew, in Pater-Noſter-Row.
MDCCLXXXIII.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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MDCCLXXXIII.

ERRATA.

Page.	Line.			
ii	14	before *or*	insert (	
	17	after *ſtate*	insert)	
12	20	for *this*	read *the*	
16	2	after *gives*	insert *it*	
26	1	for *Lord*	read *law*	
64	25	*One*	*Some*	
	28	*Bright*	*Eaſy*	
75	12	*terrors*	*ſorrows*	
99	15	for *in to it, for coming*	read *for coming into it,*	
103	17	for *much a*	read *each*	
147	16	*a*	*at*	
149	23	*provoke*	*promote*	
160	27	*of it*	*it of*	
164	10	*occured*	*occurred*	
186	23	*at*	*as*	

ERRATA.

Page.	Line.			
11	14	before er		insert (
	17	after state		insert)
12	20	for this		read the
16	2	after gives		insert it
26	1	for Land		read into
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103	17	for much a		read each
147	16	it		at
149	23	provoke		promote
160	27	of it		it of
164	10	occured		occurred
186	23	at		as

PREFACE.

CUSTOM has ſo eſtabliſhed it as a kind of tax on all Writers, to prefix a preliminary diſcourſe to every ſort of publication, that an omiſſion of one would be looked upon as a refuſal of an expected tribute.

How difficult ſoever, then, I find it, in the preſent caſe, to write an introduction to the following ſheets, I will not omit it, leſt the vanity of particularity, and not the difficulty of the taſk, ſhould be charged upon me.

I could follow the beaten track, and aſſure my Readers, that the deſire of my Friends had at length prevailed with me to ſend my thoughts into the world; or, that a few incorrect copies having got about, I

was, though with great reluctance, obliged to ſend them myſelf to the Preſs. Theſe, or ſome ſuch reaſons as theſe, I might urge, induced me to appear in print; and, perhaps, ſuch excuſes might be better received than the *truth*. But as I prefer *that* (even in a Preface) to fiction, I ſhall not deviate from it.

The truth, then, is ſimply this:—Having, for a great number of years, accuſtomed myſelf to commit my thoughts to paper, on every ſubject that occurred to me, and to write them down on ſcraps of paper, without order; or, if ſome are more methodical, yet they were mingled with other thoughts, and, by a courſe of time, were got into a very confuſed ſtate; therefore, having a little leiſure, I reſolved to arrange my ſcattered fragments, and to print them in ſome kind of regularity, for my own uſe and comfort. This is the exact ſtate of the caſe: my Preface, then, ought to have been addreſſed to myſelf, as it is for myſelf I ſend theſe collections of thoughts to the Preſs. If any one

reads

reads them beſides the Author, I truſt them to their candour; if not, I ſhall have reaped the advantage I intended, that of knowing where to refer to any ſubject on which I have employed my thoughts.

Perhaps it may be ſaid, I had no buſineſs to think at all. Perhaps ſo; but Thinking is a liberty we have all a right to be indulged in; and, unleſs in matters which can diſturb the peace of ſociety, I hope we may be at liberty even to *think aloud*.

Theſe Papers, indeed, were the ſecret whiſpers of my own heart. I truſt they are harmleſs, and that, if read, they will be found to contain nothing that can give the ſlighteſt offence to the three great articles of our happineſs, Reaſon, Religion, and Virtue.

THE AUTHOR.

ESSAY INTRODUCTORY.

BEFORE I ſend from my cloſet thoſe Thoughts and Opinions which have been the ſubjects of my leiſure hours there, I think it neceſſary to appriſe thoſe who may take the trouble to read them, that they will find nothing new; as I conceive, that all that can be ſaid on Hiſtory, Morality, Religion, Phyſics, and Metaphyſics, has been ſaid by the learned and unlearned long ago. I fear, as this is acknowledged, I ſhall find it needful to make an apology for writing at all. This taſk, indeed, is a hard one; ſuffice it to ſay, that, while pens, ink, and paper, remain in the world, there will be ſcribblers, as well as wiſe men, who will make uſe of them. Thoſe who have felt the pleaſure of committing their thoughts to paper, will, I am perſuaded, pardon me. Thoſe who have not, can have no idea of the ſenſation: I muſt therefore crave their candour to believe the truth of what I ſet forth in my Preface; and add to it, that ſcribbling is nearly the only thing in which I find

amuſement: and this, I truſt, will draw their forgiveneſs. I aſſure all who may look on theſe pages, that, though I enter the world veiled, I tremble every ſtep I take. I rely on this, that Truth has ever guided my pen; I can at leaſt affirm, Sincerity has.

Whatever wants an apology in theſe Eſſays, muſt ariſe from want of knowledge, or want of manner. That they will be very deficient in both, I readily believe; but I think I do not deceive myſelf, when I ſay, I never meant to deceive others. I ſhall meet, perhaps, with few friends; but thoſe few muſt be ſincere, becauſe unknown. I ſhall meet, no doubt, with many enemies, who will condemn without mercy. The former muſt conſole me for the latter; though I will endeavour, while I feel their wrath, to profit by their cenſure.

Praiſe and blame are equally profitable to a mind diſpoſed not to be elated, but ſpurred on to good actions, by praiſe; and not depreſſed, but diſpoſed to amend, by blame. Where praiſe is juſt, it with good reaſon delights; where it is unjuſt, it ought to be made not ſo for the future. Where cenſure is juſt, it ought to correct, not anger us; and where it is unjuſt, it ſhould paſs unheeded by us.

ESSAY

ESSAY II.

IT has been much doubted, and perhaps will ever remain ſo, whether the thinking part of mankind receive moſt pleaſure or pain from their ſpeculations. The fine faculties of the mind, when exerted in contemplation, certainly add quickneſs to the feelings occaſioned by every incident which meets us in life. I have, however, after a long and minute obſervation on the paſſions and tempers of mankind, found reaſon to think, that there is as great a variety in the ſpeculative part of the world, and conſequently in their feelings, as in the more common run of mankind. The man with ſtrong paſſions, who contemplates, generally turns his thoughts to injuries, hardſhips, and ſorrows; ſees the cloud, and pronounces a ſtorm: if it burſts, he feels all the pangs of ſorrow, and adds to every feeling by thinking of every aggravation to the diſtreſs. His lofty mind condeſcends not to make trifles contribute to his happineſs, though he too often makes them do ſo to his miſery. In every common incivility he ſees an affront; in every ſmall, accidental ſlight, an

injury. Quick-ſighted, ſenſible of his own conſequence, he reſents the leaſt wound to his pride. He contemplates mankind, but it is to compare them with himſelf; he ſees the ſorrows of others, but it is to find that his own exceed. High ſenſe, when it meets with high paſſions, is detrimental to the peace of the poſſeſſor, and to that of thoſe about him. He proclaims his opinions, and is aſtoniſhed if his arguments fail of ſucceſs. His joys are few, and his ſorrows many; for his microſcope enlarges every thing odious, and diminiſhes every thing beautiful.—Another ſort of Speculators ſkim the ſurface of nature: they fly juſt above the common ſtandard of underſtanding, and, ſurveying the whole creation, ſee a confuſed heap of things, which they are too volatile to ſeparate; whereupon they decide, that all is vanity, all is alike; and therefore reſolve to have no vexation of ſpirit. They feel happineſs from the notion, that nothing is of conſequence in a world where all meet with good and with bad more or leſs; therefore, Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. This is their motto. They feel little from afflictions, and not much from bleſſings; for their inſenſibility to both which, they think themſelves the wiſeſt of mankind. Theſe airy beings do mankind neither good nor harm: the wiſe pity them, the ignorant envy them; they themſelves

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reap the pleaſure of ſelf-ſatisfaction, but not much elſe.——There is another ſort of phlegmatic Philoſopher, whoſe gloomy ſoul ſees a dark and diſmal world; frights himſelf out of it with the view; and then, not having an opportunity to contradict his ideas by mixing with it, ſtrengthens his opinion by every thing he hears; wraps himſelf up in his own web, which grows tougher and tougher every hour. At length he becomes callous to feeling, by feeling too much; and, if private misfortune reaches him, he only views it as one of the diſmal things to which this diſmal world is ſubjected, and therefore is not particularly affected by it. He lives an uncomfortable, unſociable, uncharitable life, and dies unregretted.——Another ſort of Thinkers there are, who turn their philoſophy to their own great advantage, but are not particularly uſeful to mankind in general; though, it muſt be allowed, they are ſo to thoſe individuals with whom they are connected, or who live within their reach. Theſe view the world with an equal and compoſed eye; take in the manners of mankind, the events of life, and the beauties of creation, in one comprehenſive view; conſider and ſpeculate on things great and ſmall, and, by doing ſo, make the leaſt yield them pleaſure, and the greateſt neither exhilarate nor depreſs them too much. Theſe receive pleaſure from the

blowing

blowing of a roſe, or the ſight of an inſect. Their amuſements, indeed, are few, to outward appearance; but they are ſeated in the mind, and are therefore innumerable. To a ſpeculative mind, the ſmalleſt, as well as the greateſt incident, is curious: it ſees a character in every paſſing acquaintance, and pays itſelf for the loſs of time in a viſit of ceremony, by inward contemplation; which, as it is not balanced towards either the gloomy or the lively, brings variety ſufficient not to diſguſt, but entertain. Such as theſe deeply indeed feel the ſtrokes of affliction, but ſtill they meet them with calmneſs; do not ſuppoſe themſelves the only, or the worſt of ſufferers, nor that they are not to ſuffer becauſe their caſe is common. The enlarged manner in which they view every object, induces them to think every, the ſmalleſt thing, of importance, which can conduce to the comfort or pleaſure of mankind; and that comfort and pleaſure are ſo neceſſary to the paſſing life agreeably to themſelves and others, that they do not let ſmall things diſturb their peace: they look on trifles as trifles, when they ariſe to ſour their mind, but as of importance, when they ariſe to make it chearful. Tranquillity is their great *ne plus ultra*, for which they make their minds expand to graſp at every paſſing trifle that can bring a moment's pleaſure, but cloſe at the touch

of

of every trifle that can ruffle. By this way of thinking, they receive and give pleaſure from the minuteſt article; and philanthropy is the reſult of their philoſophy. They are glad to conduce, in the mereſt trifle, to the ſatisfaction of another. Their comfort is of importance in their ſight; and as they are ſenſible, that thoſe things are of conſequence to the happineſs of others, which to them are trifles, they willingly forego their own ſmaller ſatisfaction, to procure a greater to another. For example—Will my going to ſuch a place prevent another—I will not go, ſay they; for though I ſhall receive amuſement by going, yet their diſappointment at not going will be greater than mine would be; therefore I will not go—but I won't even let them ſee it is they prevent me, leſt it take off a moment's ſatisfaction in the going. The ſatisfaction of their own mind repays them, and every pleaſure to another is one to them. Paſſions of every kind ſink into mere paſſing ſhadows, in the ſoul where paſt, preſent, and future, ſtand continually in view; where the conſequence of each action is ſeen at the time of impulſe; and where calm Reaſon is allowed, by a habit of ſpeculation, to exert all her force. Anger is ſubdued by fearing to irritate another; and, in ſhort, every ariſing paſſion is quieted and turned, by a compoſure which a long courſe of deep and enlarged

larged ſentiments have brought to the ſoul. They read not only mankind, but themſelves, with a clear and unprejudiced eye; and are ſurpriſed to find ſelf-knowledge repreſented as a hard, when it is to them an eaſy, attainment. To others candid, to themſelves ſevere, is verified in theſe compoſed philoſophers; not by condemning themſelves in the groſs, and praiſing others by the lump; but by allowing thoſe defects in others to admit of excuſe, which in themſelves they condemn, becauſe they ſee how little others have to draw them off from them, but what advantages themſelves have enjoyed to ſhew them their errors. Worthy actions they ſee, and ſee with pleaſure, in themſelves and in others; but in others they generally ſeem more meritorious, becauſe the inducements have been few, perhaps, in compariſon, to lead them to perform them. They receive praiſe with a wiſh ever to deſerve it; and heave a gentle ſigh to Heaven, for this approbation of God, as well as Man. They receive contumely with equality of mind: if falſe, they rejoice that it is ſo; if true, they blame themſelves, not the reporter.—But enough of theſe Philoſophers: let us leave them to enjoy their own delightful tranquillity, and, if we envy, imitate them.

The ſpeculations of the perſons laſt deſcribed, tend,

tend, indeed, to make themſelves and their own circle happy; but they do not ſtretch to that extenſive benefit, which reſults from the labours of thoſe who ſpend their lives in ſtudying and inveſtigating ſome particular ſcience, or in ſeeking for the cauſe in the effect of ſome of the wonders of nature. Theſe, it muſt be allowed, are the *Thinkers* who are of moſt benefit to mankind. They may juſtly be called *Free*-thinkers (more deſerving of that name than thoſe who confine all nature within their own narrow bounds). Theſe Philoſophers ſearch for the great ſecrets of nature, not to doubt, but to prove a Providence; for the deeper they go, the higher will be their wonder, and the ſurer their belief. They explore nature for the benefit of mankind, and their own pleaſure. Works of art, too, deſerve due praiſe; and every freſh improvement takes its riſe from the man of ſtudy. To reſt ſatisfied with nature and art as we find it, is, happily for us, the general turn of mankind; but it is alſo happy, that ſome men of genius ſtrike out, in every age, ſomething new, uſeful, and beautiful. The arts, of ſome particular ſorts, never, perhaps, were ſo high as at preſent; and though we cannot compliment a manufactory with putting it quite upon a level with a philoſophical enquiry into nature, it deſerves at leaſt high praiſe, for the indefatigable la-

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bour which brought it to its perfection; and, indeed, the head cannot be ſhallow, which ſets the hand ſo craftily to work. Long and unwearied pains muſt go to the bringing any, the moſt trivial art, to perfection; and every labour of an individual, which contributes to the eaſe, delight, or knowledge of the whole, claims our gratitude and our praiſe. Even the perfection of a pin was not attained without long labour and many diſappointments on the part of the inventor; and I cannot help reverencing every ſuch perſon, and regarding him as a Philoſopher; though he that could lay open the ſyſtem of the heavens, claims, with moſt, the title to himſelf. Whoever has patience to explore, and reſolution to fix his mind to, one object or ſubject, for the benefit of others, deſerves, in my opinion, the name of a Philoſopher, both from his patience and benevolence.

In former ages, we read of the laughing and the crying, or the grave and the gay Philoſophers—I mean they were *profeſſionally* ſo. In our days, as I have obſerved, the eye of Speculation will either dwell on the gloomy or the ſportive view of mankind; but thoſe who ſet up for *patterns* of wiſdom, on each ſide, are vaniſhed. The light of revelation diſpelled thoſe miſts of error, even though the profeſſors of them did not become Chriſtians: but it taught all mankind to think,

that

that things of importance were few, and thoſe few were ſerious; that things of ſmall value were numerous, and therefore not worth regarding. The mind of man, ever buſy, and ever inquiſitive, when ſatisfied with regard to the eſſentials of his exiſtence, began to exert itſelf in exploring nature, in inventing arts, and in diſplaying its diſcoveries to the world. We ſee, then, that to condemn all philoſophy or ſpeculation, would be as abſurd as to ſuppoſe a whole nation was crooked, from having ſeen but one of its inhabitants ſo. I have deſcribed four ſorts: the firſt, thoſe whoſe reflections tend to their own diſquiet, and that of other people's.—The ſecond, the ſuperficial Philoſophers, whoſe airy manner of taking every thing for nothing makes their own hearts light, but whoſe opinions are not productive of any real happineſs.—The third *Thinker* is the gloomy ſpeculatiſt, who draws a black veil over his eyes, and ſees all events and actions, men and manners, in a gloomy medium: theſe men hurt themſelves, but are not much regarded by the world.—The fourth Philoſopher I named, is he who views the world as in camera: men, manners, events, effects, and cauſes, paſs before him in their own colours, neither blackened by gloom, nor brightened by levity. His ſpeculations tend to compoſe his own mind, and to make him a harmleſs,

if

if not a uſeful, member of ſociety: where he can give pleaſure, he gives; and where he can receive it, he receives it.—The laſt Philoſopher is the man who merits moſt of his fellow-creatures: his labours are for their good; and though perhaps it may be ſaid that he rides his own hobby-horſe, yet he rides him ultimately for the benefit of others: his cogitations are for the benefit of ſociety, or at leaſt for their amuſement: perhaps he ſpends his wealth, health, and life, in the diſcovery of ſome uſeful piece of knowledge, that may give eaſe, comfort, or conveniency, to thouſands of his fellow-creatures, or tend to give unſpeakable delight to thoſe who can follow him in his diſcoveries, who do not particularly benefit by them.

I hope I have fully proved, it is impoſſible to decide as an arbitrary queſtion, whether Philoſophers or Speculative perſons (call them which you pleaſe) are moſt beneficial or detrimental to ſociety, ſince ſo many different ſorts are to be found.

While men are men, there muſt be found among them thoſe who think; and though there are ſome exceptions, yet, for the moſt part, I am apt to believe, pleaſure and profit attend on contemplation and philoſophy.

ESSAY

ESSAY III.

THE knowledge of ourſelves, with all due deference to ancient writers, is a matter, the difficulty of which lies not in the thing itſelf, but in the attaining that ſincerity that is neceſſary towards its perfection. If a perſon in reality wiſhes to know himſelf, and is deſirous to find out his real diſpoſition, let him but be true to himſelf, in examining what are his motives of action, the principal turn of his thoughts, and the general run of his diſcourſe, and he will not be long ignorant of the ſecret bias of his heart. Let a perſon take the ſame ſort of view of himſelf, that he would do, if, for any material reaſon, he wiſhed to dive into another's character, and his heart will open to him immediately: he will ſee himſelf as in a glaſs; and that not an obſcure and dark one, but ſuch a one as will reflect even his defects in true and genuine colours,---will magnify rather than diminiſh them; and from this reaſon, becauſe he is true to himſelf, and in earneſt in his enquiry, wiſhing to open a way to reformation of error, and

every tendency to what is inconſiſtent with ſound ſenſe and goodneſs.

Another reaſon why we are deficient in this knowledge, or negligent in the ſearch of it, is this, becauſe we do not intend to make uſe of it, if we attain it: we like ourſelves very well as we are: we fancy that even our failings are leſs than thoſe of other people, and our little arts towards others of uſe to us in the intercourſe with the world: we therefore don't care to ſearch to the true cauſe of theſe failings, for, if we do, we ſhall think ourſelves, in ſome meaſure, bound to correct them; and our ſlight inſincerities towards others we had rather continue, without probing to the ſource of them, as we might probably find they proceeded from ſo dark a corner, that it muſt be thoroughly cleanſed, before we could bear again to hold ſweet converſe with ourſelves. Thus, I am perſuaded, the difficulty of ſelf-knowledge ariſes from the conſequences that would follow a ſincere ſearch, and the difficulty of procuring that neceſſary reſolution to be in earneſt with ourſelves in the doing it. But how ſhort-ſighted are we, in neglecting what would be of the greateſt benefit to us, and, after a very ſhort time, would turn to the higheſt pleaſure! How very reſpectable is that character, which takes its riſe at the great fountain of action, and begins in the appro-

approbation of the heart! Such a character can never be ſhaken: the ground-work is laid too deep, and the ſuperſtructure is all too uniform to totter by the united force of danger and temptation. A righteous man is ſatisfied from himſelf: he can turn inward, and there find conſolation, in the certainty that his intentions were ſuch, as, if known, would acquit him to the world, as well as to himſelf and to his God.

Know thyſelf, was a wiſe precept, but generally ranked among the number of thoſe eaſier laid down than followed. True it is, that it ſeldom is ſo; but, as I have ſaid, the taſk is not attended with difficulty from the inſcrutableneſs of our natures, but the inſincerity of our hearts in the work. We cannot be hid from ourſelves. So far are we from being a myſtery, that nothing is more plain to our underſtandings than the reaſons of our actions. The only bar in our ſearch is the conſciouſneſs that we ought to make good uſe of it, and, having dealt fairly in it, to caſt off whatever is diſgraceful to our nature, and adopt whatever would be an honour to it, whatever would render our next enquiry into ourſelves agreeable and delightful. Whoever, therefore, with ſincerity looks into himſelf, in order to become acquainted with his motives of action (for that is true ſelf-knowledge), and in order to diſco-

ver his failings, and to correct them, will eaſily attain to ſuch a certainty, with regard to himſelf, and to ſuch a command over himſelf, as will amply reward his ſearch, and give him conſiſtency of action and regularity of conduct.

ESSAY IV.

AMONG all the infirmities of our nature, there is none more detrimental to ourſelves, and prejudicial to others, than taking a ſort of delight in a tale that ſpeaks ill of another: a ſtory told to the prejudice of the reputation, behaviour, good-nature, or good ſenſe, of another, be they ever ſo little known to the perſons to whom the tale is told, is ſure to meet with greedy hearers, and who are as ready to tell it again as they were to hear it at firſt. Whether mankind in general think they are exalted by another's debaſement, or what other motive they may have to hear and tell a tale to the diſadvantage of their fellow-creature, with ſo much avidity, I will not now determine;

determine; but I will venture to affirm, that it reflects neither honour nor importance upon them. A friend of mine, who is very remarkable for his ſteadineſs of temper, whenever he hears a ſtory of this ſort told with eagerneſs, always dryly remarks, "Now I have heard one ſide." This ſeldom fails to diſcompoſe the tale-tellers, and they ſcarce know whether they ought not to take it up as an affront to their veracity; but after ſome little time they conſider, that, as they had it ſecond-hand, the perſon that told them is the injured perſon; and they reply, with ſome warmth, "Nay, Sir, pleaſe to aſk Mr. Such-a-one if it is not true." "No (ſays my friend) that I certainly ſhall not; as that would be to make ſure of having the ſame ſtory told again."

Theſe reflections occurred to me from a very remarkable inſtance of this infirmity, as I have gently called it, of catching with pleaſure at an ill report, and of ſpreading one.

I was in company ſome time ago, where a ſtory was told, much to the prejudice of a gentleman who has been married a little more than a year, and is now parted from his wife, by his own deſire. The cruelty of this was enlarged, and every aggravating circumſtance dwelt upon; and, among other matters, it was ſaid, that he was very old, and ſhe very young; and that, to add to all the reſt,

he had prejudiced her relations againſt her. All the company ſat in judgment on this gentleman, condemned him without judge or jury, and ſettled it that ſhe was happy to have been parted from ſuch a brute. There was a good many in company, and as each heard this ſtory with great attention, ſo moſt of them intended to repeat it to the next they went into: it was a delicious morſel for the tellers and the next hearers. One of the company, happening to fall next in the way of a family ſomewhat connected with the ſuppoſed injured lady, aſked them ſome queſtions concerning this affair, and expreſſed ſome concern for the ſhare they muſt have taken in her diſtreſs: but how ſurpriſed muſt the perſon have been to hear, that the whole matter aroſe from herſelf, and that every kindneſs had been ſhewn her by her huſband; that the deſire to part had come from herſelf; that her ſtrange averſion to him had hurt him extremely; and that he was, in all reſpects, a man of an upright and amiable diſpoſition: that he had tried every means to make her happy; and though ſhe had been very extravagant, he had aſſured her, he ſhould not have regarded that, if he could have had her affection; but all would not do. Her father was ſo incenſed againſt her, from the thorough conviction of her bad temper and his goodneſs, that he had forbid her coming

to his houſe when ſhe left her huſband's; but he had wrote ſo earneſtly, to intreat him to let nothing between them induce him to behave harſhly to her, that the father at laſt conſented to ſee her. I own, I had a pleaſure, when I met the ſame company again, which I did very ſoon, in contradicting all their ill reports; and I cannot but lament the propenſity to ſwallow greedily a ſtory to the diſcredit of another. If it is true, it ought to be related with caution, and heard with pain. Were this the caſe, we ſhould ſoon have fewer ſtories circulated from houſe to houſe; and the advantages of this to ſociety in general are too obvious to need being pointed out.

ESSAY V.

THERE are beauties in ſome kind of writings, which ſtrike us almoſt every time they are read, and are ſo conſonant to the mind of man, that they ſeem, as it were, but the idea of all minds expreſſed in words by one. Theſe kind of beautiful truths no where appear ſo often as in the Scripture. The poetical and conciſe ſtyle in which they are wrote, ſuit thoſe few ſtrong and fixed principles and poſitions which are in the breaſt and underſtanding of all mankind. To inſtance, in two or three——When Saul had diſobeyed the ſtrict injunction of God to ſlay every beaſt of the Amalekite, he endeavours to excuſe his diſobedience, by ſaying it was in order to offer thoſe beaſts he had ſaved to God himſelf in Gilgal. Samuel firſt appeals to his own deciſion, whether he thinks God would admit this as an excuſe; then adds, in one of thoſe conciſe and convicting ſentences I have been alluding to, "Behold, to obey is better than ſacri-"fice; and to hearken, than the fat of rams!" Does not the underſtanding and the heart, reaſon

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and conſcience, bow aſſent to this doctrine? We feel its truth in our inward ſoul, and confeſs, that to obey is better than to ſacrifice; and to hearken, than to offer the fat of rams. Obedience muſt be more acceptable to our Creator, than any conceits of our own; and to liſten to his commands, more becoming a creature, than the richeſt offers, if not required of us. Rebellion is as the ſin of witchcraft, and ſtubbornneſs is as idolatry: it leads us into a thouſand unneceſſary and unacceptable acts, and makes us ſet up our own ideas of religion, and paſs over judgment and the love of God, which he has commanded, and will alone accept. The will of God once known, we have nothing to do but to obey; and all the happineſs we can poſſibly enjoy follows, both here and hereafter. Another of the beautiful and pointed expreſſions is when Balak wiſhes to know what to do to obtain God's favour and forgiveneſs. He would even ſacrifice his ſon, if need be, to obtain them. "Shall I (exclaims the Prophet) doſt thou ſay, ſhall I give the *fruit* of my *body* for the *ſin* of my *ſoul!*" The very manner of expreſſing the queſtion of Balak carries its contradiction with it. Can the ſon, the innocent ſon of thy body, atone for the preſumption which has ſtained thy ſoul? No; on more rational terms thy pardon will be ſealed, and thy offence

offence cancelled; even by obedience to that Lord which you *already* know. "He *hath* ſhewed "thee, O man, what is good; and what does "he require of thee, but to do juſtice, and to "love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy "God!"—So plain, ſo expreſs, ſo conſonant to right reaſon, are all the commands of God! Sure we may exclaim, in the words of our Saviour himſelf, His yoke is eaſy, and his burden light. All that God prohibits, are thoſe things which are occaſioned by the fall of our nature; and all that he commands, are productive of bringing it again to its original perfection, and are agreeable to its primitive ſtate. Some uninſpired writers have had this happy manner of expreſſing themſelves: Shakeſpeare has many ſuch ſentences; Doctor Young is particular for his pointed expreſſions, both in proſe and verſe; and the mind is pleaſed, and the heart bettered, at the ſame time.

Morality, ſays our excellent Spectator, without Religion, is a dull, inſipid, lifeleſs ſervice. How true is this obſervation! and we may add, that Morality without Religion is unſupported by one of its ſafeſt props; for I believe every principle inſecure, that has not that for its ſupport. I will allow, that even Morality, as it is virtue, appears, and is, amiable and uſeful; but, in time of temptation, it may fall away: it will ſtand, perhaps, a little

little while; but touch a darling paſſion, try to ſhake a tender ſtring, bring a temptation which a man is naturally inclined to comply with, and all the airy fabric totters to its centre. Its foundation is in the ſand, and the ſtorms will ſhake it, and, by their continuance, overthrow it. The great and wiſe anſwer of excellent Joſeph ſtands on record without effect, but from the beautiful light which Religion caſts upon it. Why not commit the crime to which we are tempted, if we do not know that it is diſpleaſing to God, or that he will puniſh us for it? And if Moraliſts ſay, they do not diſpute that point, but act as if to give account; I pray, how do they know that they are to give that account, but from Revelation.—We often meet with, in writings not particularly celebrated, truths which give us pleaſure, as they ſtrike in uniſon with the finer feelings of the ſoul. Why is a picture of virtue ſtruggling with diſtreſs pleaſing to the reader, but becauſe it places nature in that point of view which ſeems moſt to recommend it? Sentences from the pulpit ſometimes ſtrike us in this manner, and we feel a glow of virtuous ambition, a kind of momentary goodneſs, which is both delightful and uſeful. Of this ſort was a ſentiment I heard lately, from a graceful divine: he was recommending it to us not to be diſtreſſed at the

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mixture of good people and bad in this world. The bad, ſays he, without the good, would loſe one of their ſtrongeſt incitements to virtue; and let not then the good repine at being thus inſtrumental to the happineſs of their fellow-creatures. The bad are to the good trials of their own virtue, and one of God's merciful methods to reclaim the vicious. The good man's life, ſaid he, is the beſt comment on the truths of religion; and they never can come with ſtronger force than from the mouth of the holy. Their reproofs muſt be borne with, ſince they remonſtrate only againſt ſuch things as they have denied themſelves before; and I may add, they commend no virtue which themſelves have not felt the ſweets of. And all muſt acknowledge, when they hear a ſentence of truth uttered from a perſon whoſe life has proved it, that we feel it very forcibly: it is like a beautiful painting put in a right light by the hand that drew it.

ESSAY VI.

TO be moderate, is by moſt allowed to be right, but by few reliſhed, and by fewer practiſed. Some are even raſh enough to aſſert, that to be moderate in ſome inſtances, is wrong, and by many it is thought that moderation is inſipidity. But (if the impetuous can conſider) a little conſideration would open to them new ideas, and a juſter eſtimate of the virtue of moderation. When duly weighed, it will be found to conſiſt in the refinement of every virtue; to be the enſurer of ſucceſs in every undertaking; to be the ſecurer of our happineſs, the extricator of our difficulties, the permanence of our poſſeſſions: it will be found to be the great perfector of our ſouls, and, indeed, to be perfection itſelf; for an able writer has obſerved, whatever riſes above, or ſinks beneath, one due medium, is imperfect. In our greateſt concern, Religion, if our zeal riſes too high, it is enthuſiaſtic and preſumptuous; if we are careleſs and cold, we are unworthy of the honour of being Chriſtians. In temporal concerns, he that is haſty and hazardous, loſes more than he gains;

gains; and if he is ſlothful and neglectful, he rather goes back than forward: but he who with ſteady induſtry purſues his employment, whatever it may be, ſeldom meets with diſappointment, but reaps both praiſe and profit.

As moderation is a wiſe qualification in buſineſs, it is ſo alſo in our conduct towards one another. Heat, poſitiveneſs, raſhneſs, are liable to give us much uneaſineſs, and bring with them a thouſand troubles. On the other hand, unſteadineſs, irreſolution, puſillanimity, render us uncomfortable to ourſelves, and all about us; and both the one and the other prevent our gaining many advantages, which a ſteady, cool, unprejudiced conduct, would bring us, and which would alſo procure us the reſpect and regard of friends, and even of foes. Moderation in thought, word, and action, make a man maſter of himſelf and of the world: it gains him many friends, and throws the blame on his enemies, if any ſuch he has: it enables him to purſue every attempt with much hope of ſucceſs; and, if he fails, it leaves him no room to blame himſelf. Moderation in pleaſures gives the trueſt reliſh in them, and leaves delight in the recollection of them. In brief, in whatever light we view this principle, we ſhall find it eſſential to our good; it is an active, not a lifeleſs principle, but pervades

vades the whole ſoul of the wiſe man, at the ſame time that it makes him forgive the want of it in others. All joys to him are durable ones, becauſe he never poſſeſſes them with that gloomy maxim, Let me eat and drink, for to-morrow I die; but with that chearful one, Whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, I do all to the glory of God, the good of man, and the happineſs of myſelf.

ESSAY VII.

WHILE Religion affords us the moſt exalted picture of Humanity during its ſtate of activity, ſo it gives us the only pleaſing one of it at the hour of death. Many great and diſtinguiſhed characters have made their exit out of this world in a manner that points them out as brave, or collected, or affectionate. Such ends pleaſe us in the recapitulation; but none can afford *complete* ſatisfaction to the mind, but inſtances of greatneſs of behaviour in the double capacity of the man and the immortal. When the

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actions of life are over, we fix our eye with attention on the departing ſhadow, to catch ſomething, as it ſinks away, that may cheer us in the view of ourſelves, as it were, in that period, and ſupport us when our light comes to be extinguiſhed too. The dying hero, who exults at his conqueſt over the enemy of his country, we admire and revere; but it falls to the lot of few to imitate him. The monarch who dies recommending his people to the care of his ſucceſſor, is an exalted and a pleaſing character. The father who takes leave of his children with affection, and the wife who burns with her departed huſband, are pictures of a beautiful appearance; but they may not lie in our power or our inclination to copy them. There is nothing in any of theſe ſuited to *all* mankind; they may pleaſe, but they do not affect the world in general; that which does ſo, muſt be ſomething which all may both wiſh, and have it in their power to imitate. This attractive character is fully perfected in the dying Chriſtian: all Nature cries out, with fervent rapture and deſire, Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his.

Religion unites, in one character, the Hero, the Philoſopher, and the Saint. With greatneſs of ſoul, like the Hero, he riſes ſuperior to the darts of death, and bears its pains with fortitude, for the

good

good it brings. With calmneſs, like the Philoſopher, he ſees the world recede, and takes a final leave of all around him. With the Saint, he looks forward with rapture to the world that now is opening to his view, and cries out, on a review of his paſt conduct, "Oh Death, where is thy ſting!" and on the proſpect of immortality and reſurrection before him, he exults, "Oh Grave, where is thy victory!" Surely, ſuch a one may be ſaid to enjoy both worlds while he lives, and to feel no pang at parting with one of them, when he dies. Is it poſſible, then, for any thing to plead more powerfully for Religion, than the importance it claims from the reſources it affords when every other thing fails us? It brings conſolations which nothing but itſelf can bring, and which it alone offers to all. From every other merit we may derive a partial ſatisfaction, and ſome perſons may have ſuch as to others is denied: either they cannot attain it, or, if attained, it might not anſwer in bringing them conſolation in diſtreſs, or pleaſure in the poſſeſſion. But Religion, with a liberal hand, pours its bleſſings on all alike: it is balm to the wounded ſpirit, it is chearfulneſs to the proſperous, it is alacrity to the inquiſitive, it is ſupport to the diſappointed, it is pleaſure to the ſpeculative, it is the flower of youth, and a crown of glory to age; and, after having led

them all through every ſtage, with ſatisfaction to themſelves, and honour from all that knew them, it lays them down in peace on the bed of death, calms their fears through that dangerous paſſage, and lands them ſafe on that ſhore, where it has already prepared myriads of holy beings to welcome their arrival, to ſing ſongs of joy for their triumphs, and to mount with them, and conduct them up to thoſe exalted regions of bliſs, for which it has prepared and made them fit.

Theſe are thy great deeds, O Religion, thou friend of man, by whom our nature is exalted and made happy! Without Religion, our lives would be dull, and, if wicked, our deaths are agony. With Religion, the beſt life is the moſt chearful, and death is never frightful.

ESSAY VIII.

CONSCIENCE, that ſecret and ſincere monitor within us, is, methinks, not ſo frequent, nor ſo perſuaſive, in her whiſpers, as ſhe was accuſtomed to be. Whether Paſſion is ſo ſtrong as to ſmother her attempts to ſpeak, or whether it makes men ſo deaf, that they do not hear her voice, I cannot tell; but her checks ſeem to have little avail, and her ſting to have loſt its venom. She is, no doubt, ſtruggling under theſe obſtructions with all the ſtrength ſhe has; but faint and ineffectual are her efforts. What, ſaid I, can be the cauſe of this? Are men weaker in their underſtandings, or are they more ignorant than formerly? No; neither of theſe appear to be the cauſe. Their capacities retain their ſtrength, and knowledge every where abounds. But it is not in manhood, but in youth, that the precious ſeeds of Conſcience receive a blight, and ſhe brings no fruit to perfection. From early days, the mind is accuſtomed to hear of vice without a bluſh, and, when capable of joining in committing it, youth wants neither temptation, op-

portunity, or inclination, to do ſo. Youthful days are full of life, ſpirit, and vigour, and when employed in innocent or uſeful amuſements and exerciſes, how pleaſing do they appear! They train the future man to activity and induſtry, and fit him for a life either of bodily or mental uſefulneſs. But, alas! by confounding ages together in one ſchool, the boy learns the manners, the inclinations, the ſports of the youth; and the youth puſhes on to all the actions, the diverſions, the behaviour of the man. Parents delight to ſee their ſon, ſo already, as it is ſtyled, grown up, and, by way of improvement and encouragement (perhaps from vanity), ſend and bring him into the company of perſons many years older than himſelf. Here lies the error; here is that root of all evil, which deſtroys the faithful monitor in the breaſt. Conſcience in childhood is ſeldom ſo ſevere as in riper age, becauſe the faults then committed proceed from want of knowledge, or from thoughtleſſneſs, and but ſeldom from a real intention to do amiſs: but if children are well grounded in the principles of right and wrong, Conſcience, as they advance in age, will keep their mind awake, and watchful againſt temptation; and if they fall, it rebukes them with ſuch a ſenſible feeling, that they grieve to have erred from the paths of right, and, though the offence were known only to themſelves,

ſelves, would bluſh at the recollection. But if, juſt as this inward check would exert itſelf, the boy is hurried on to new ſcenes, and gay ones too, his heart and head are too much engroſſed to liſten to any thing within him. Happy, that he is ſuppoſed to be equal to the pleaſures and ſports above his years, he brooks not the reproofs of that riſing thought, that he is on the verge of temptation, that he muſt be cautious where he treads, for that danger awaits him in every path but one. He ſtifles the monitor at once, and gives the rein to paſſion, and to the fame of being clever beyond his years. Conſcience, thus thwarted in early youth, lies dormant; nor awakes from her lethargy, till the keen darts of ſome grievous affliction rouſe her, or old-age and death force her to exert her now unavailing influence. She ruſhes on the mind of the dying with all her poiſoned darts; reproaches him with ſtifling her friendly monitions in youth; lays before him all the train of ill it has occaſioned; brings all his faults and follies before him; ſhews him how happy he might have been, if he had made her his friend; bids him look back with bitter tears of ſelf-reproach, and forward with horror at the gulph into which he is going to be plunged.

All this evil might with facility be prevented, if, in early youth, the principles of right and

wrong were kept impreſſed upon the mind, and young perſons were not haſtened to the means of forgetting thoſe principles, and to think them a burden inſtead of an honour.

It is to be lamented, in our ſchools both for boys and girls, that there is no diſtinction made for age. The child of eight apes the manners of the miſs of fifteen; and the miſs of fifteen, thoſe of the eſtabliſhed young woman.

Let children be children, in thought, word, and deed. Let them learn, but let them learn the buſineſs and employments of children: not haſtening on their capacities, but filling them up with uſeful matters; employing their minds on things preſent, not on things to come. Herein lies the great art of educating children of both ſexes. Fix their minds on their preſent buſineſs and amuſements, give them enough of both to keep their minds and bodies active, and with riper years enlarge the ſcale of them, but keep the line ſtill drawn round their own particular age. By this method, every faculty will grow up together with equal ſtrength, and virtue take faſt hold of their hearts; ſo that, when a larger ſcene of action becomes neceſſary, they may ſtart at the odious form of vice, and Conſcience fly to their aſſiſtance in temptation. This faithful friend will hold out to them reaſons ſufficient to reſiſt ſeduction; or,

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if once overcome, will give ſo deep a wound, that they will not again fall into the ſnare. She will, by this means, be reſtored to her loſt dominion; and claim her ancient right of giving reproofs to the failings and faults of man, and joy unſpeakable, joy without a name, to the upright in heart.

ESSAY IX.

I WAS ſitting the other evening on a bench in my garden, when I heard the ſound of a ſtep coming towards me. It was duſk, and I could not diſcern who it was; but a well-known voice, ſaying, "Where is he?" ſoon acquainted me it was a very welcome viſitor. When I had diſcovered myſelf to him, he told me, he had come thus abruptly upon me, to aſk my advice, in an affair of conſequence to his own peace, and the happineſs of his only daughter. I have, as you know, ſaid my friend, only this one girl: my life is wrapped up in her; and I fear ſhe has unalterably fixed her mind on a young gentleman

who is by no means worthy of her. No matter for his fortune; 'tis his character I don't like. Now, my dear friend, ſaid he, I am come to beg you would tell me the beſt method to turn her thoughts from this affair. In the firſt place, ſaid I, my good friend, are you ſure ſhe has choſe an unworthy object? How have you diſcovered him to be ſo? He told me all his reaſons, which were, indeed, very ſufficient ones. I aſked him if he had told his daughter what he had heard. He ſaid, No; he only told her in general he diſliked the young man. So much the better, ſaid I. Does ſhe know you are come to me? No. So much the better: then leave the part of the character to me, and only adhere to your general anſwer that you diſlike the match. One thing, ſaid my friend, my wife and I have determined upon, and that is, to lay another young man in her way, whom we have long wiſhed her to marry. Then, ſaid I, my dear friend, I will have no hand in the affair; for I ſee you are reſolved to drive her into the arms of Young Freelove. Nay, how's that? what, becauſe I provide a better man? Better or worſe, ſaid I, no matter, he is not Freelove. Your daughter is too ſenſible to marry for the ſake of marrying; ſhe has unfortunately taken a good opinion of (and, if you will, a fancy for) this young fellow, and therefore at preſent will like no other. If you put

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any in her way, ſhe will either run away from him with Freelove, or, if too prudent for this, ſhe will promiſe *herſelf*, and, what is worſe, perhaps *him*, never to marry another. Indeed, my dear friend, there is not a more fatal, and, I fear I may ſay, a more common error, than that of thruſting one object down the throat of a young perſon already prepoſſeſſed in favour of another. It is not in human nature to reliſh one perſon, when partiality inclines to another; nay, it would not give a favourable idea of any female, who could, with a heart full of one man, give her hand to another. Judge then for your daughter as you would judge for yourſelf. If ſhe really loves this young man, 'tis time only can wean her from him: if it is only a tranſient liking, then variety and change of place will do the matter. Only take this as a certain fact, that whoever obtrudes an object on the ſight of a perſon whoſe head is full of another, though that object is never ſo pleaſing, does but put him in the way of being compared to his diſadvantage with the perſon beloved. I give you, my dear friend, but the advice I followed in the caſe of my own ſon: at a very early age, he fell in love with a young lady, whoſe ſituation in life was by no means equal to his; and, what was worſe, her conduct and diſpoſition was not likely to make him happy.

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This attachment began during a vacation, when it was unfortunately not in my power to have him with me. As I had ever encouraged the moſt perfect openneſs to me, he ſoon made me acquainted with his inclination. I told him my fears very freely, but promiſed him not to be too haſty in my judgment; and aſſured him, that, if I found, on enquiry, ſhe was likely to make him ſteadily happy, I would wave all other conſiderations. With this kindneſs he was much pleaſed, and returned to college with ſome ſatisfaction. I was as good as my word. I enquired diligently into her character: I got acquainted with her, without her knowing who I was. Every ſtep I took I wrote Charles word of, and from time to time what I heard of her, and what I ſaw, and gave him the whole to conſider of. I laid his own future rank and fortune before him, which, though not great, yet was above the connections that ſhe would draw him into. Charles was a man of ſenſe, though with ſtrong feeling. When the time came that he was to leave college, which was at the next vacation, I got a friend of mine to invite us to his houſe, where I met him; and as I was then in an employment that did not ſuffer me to ſtay long from home, I left him there; and my friend, who loved him tenderly, and ſaw him ſtruggling with an expiring paſſion, took him a tour, with

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ſeveral other young men of family. They ſtopped a day or two at every place of amuſement they came to in their ramble, and ſpun out the time, till the lady's patience (who only wanted to be married) was worn out: ſhe married a ſhopkeeper of no very high trade; and my ſon congratulated himſelf on his own eſcape, upon hearing by chance of the great unhappineſs of the poor ſhopkeeper, who had got a virago in this angelic creature, and many qualities not likely to make Charles happy. He has ſince, as you know, met with a young lady of excellent qualities, with whom he is happy. You ſee, my dear friend, I give you advice freely, and from experience. You know your daughter has always honoured me with a particular ſhare of her affection and attention: I will make it my buſineſs to enquire into the young man's behaviour and connections, and freely ſpeak to her on the ſubject; and you may make yourſelf eaſy on her account, if you won't think of any other perſons for her, or put them in her way.—When I am maſter of the young man's character, and manner of living, and all the needful knowledge concerning him, I propoſe ſpending ſome time at my friend's houſe; and I know her of ſo open a diſpoſition, that ſhe will ſoon inform me of her love; and I ſhall appear ſhocked and ſurpriſed at ſuch a perſon as Freelove's having made

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any impreſſion on ſo ſenſible a young woman, and inform her of all I know of him, as if I had learnt his character without an idea of their attachment. This little art I do not look upon as deceit, becauſe love is a wound, which, as it was made by art, muſt be healed by it too. Love ſoftens the mind, and rough means but make it cling cloſer to the dear object it fancies would never uſe it ill. Lenient means muſt be taken to extirpate it, and emollients muſt be uſed as long as the wound requires them.

I am of opinion, indeed, that, in moſt caſes, harſh means only tend to harden the heart, and make it more obſtinately bent to do wrong, except in very young children, who are incapable of being reaſoned with; but in riper years, a tender ſolicitude, leſt you do yourſelf an injury by a wrong action, works more upon the heart, and upon the underſtanding too (in the above caſe the latter uſually follows, inſtead of leading the former), than all the ſour reaſoning that prudence and wiſdom can put together. The affections muſt have room to work; but when you preſs them down by too ſtrong arguments, when thoſe arguments are over, they will riſe ſtill higher for the preſſure they have received. The attention ſhould be obtained by engaging the feelings of the hearer, and making the heart warm with gratitude

tude to the kind admoniſher, though the inclinations are thwarted by remonſtrances. Experience will probably juſtify the opinion, that human nature is eaſier led than drove.

ESSAY X.

PASSING the other evening with a gentleman in the country, where every thing ſeemed formed to give delight and ſatisfaction, it very much ſurpriſed me to find, that, amidſt the greateſt accumulation of delights, amidſt an aſſemblage of every thing that could attract the eye, engage the attention, or pleaſe the imagination, with health to enjoy, and money to purchaſe, every luxury of life; I ſay, in the midſt of this capability of happineſs, he ſeemed inſenſible to any of the ſenſations which each of theſe things in their turn ſeemed naturally calculated to produce. After having ſhewn me, in the politeſt manner, every thing about his houſe, park, and gardens, which with rapture I ſaw and enjoyed, with the

ſame inſenſibility we proceeded to partake of all the luxuries which nature had bountifully provided for our refreſhment, and which I thankfully received, as from the kind parent of the univerſe. This pleaſure was much augmented, by the appearance of a fine family of ſons and daughters, with a wife at the head, who did honour to her ſtate and ſtation, and whoſe beauty, though on the decay, was ſtill pleaſingly attractive. Still the ſame inſenſibility had poſſeſſion of my friend; and though he received the careſſes of his little ones without a frown, it was without a ſmile too. I narrowly watched him, and could perceive, tho' he talked on numerous ſubjects, he entered into none of them; till at laſt, having touched on one, which to me appeared more trifling than any hitherto handled, he became, as it were, a new man; not, indeed, that he entered into it with any vivacity, but with eagerneſs, and with that volubility of words, and force of argument, that proved it was far from the firſt time of his conſidering that ſubject. It is not material to my readers, nor to the point I want to illuſtrate, what ſubject it was that this gentleman had at heart; ſuffice it to ſay, that I found he had been diſappointed in that one point in the early part of his life, and yet that he made it his grand point—the ſubject of his conſtant thoughts, to the utter

excluſion

excluſion of every enjoyment which nature and fortune had ſo richly laid before him. I mounted my horſe next morning, and ſauntered, as it were, to London, twirling my whip, and meditating on the weakneſs and wilfulneſs of human nature, that can for a trifle, or, indeed, for any *one* thing, be it ever ſo *great*, forego the pleaſure of the preſent moment, for the ſtoring hopes of ſomething that may never be obtained. On my entrance into London I met Bob Briſk, who invited me to his own little dinner of bacon and beans, at the next coffee-houſe. Well (ſaid I), Bob, what are you in purſuit of? Purſuit of (ſaid he), I never purſued any thing in my life but once, and that was a young lady; and when ſhe turned her back on me, I turned my back on her, made matters even, and reſolved never to wiſh again. I have gone on happily ever ſince; and when I have nothing of my own, I enjoy what belongs to other people: when I have, I am willing others ſhould have a ſhare; and ſo I now invite you to my bacon and beans.

Though I am not quite of Bob Briſk's mind, that it is better never to wiſh,---that is, I would not quite reſolve on what I am not quite ſure is poſſible,---yet I am of opinion, from long experience, and every day's proof, that it is the higheſt folly for any one ſo to fix their mind on any one

object,

object, as to make it abſorb all others. Every impulſe that is natural to the human mind is innocent, and affords it pleaſure, provided it leaves it at liberty to let go the ſtring, if it will not bear to be wound up to the ſummit; and provided alſo it leaves it at liberty to enjoy whatever elſe it meets with in its way. If we would enſure happineſs, as far as it regards ourſelves, we muſt avoid letting any one thing be the prevailing ſubject of our thoughts; if we do, whether it be love, anger, riches, or any other ſcheme, it will ſubject us to a thouſand and a thouſand inconveniences; it will prevent many thoughts, words, and actions, that would otherwiſe have naturally ariſen, and been of great uſe both to ourſelves and others. The freer the mind is kept from particular attentions, the more capable it is of enjoying the pleaſures and good things of life, and of entering with perſpicuity and eaſe into the knowledge of any thing that happens to lie in our way: for when the thoughts are diſengaged, they are ready for any ſubject; but when one engroſſes them, we grow ſtupid to every other, and, wrapped up in *that*, forget that the mind was made to take in every idea, both moral and divine; and, ſurely, it is greatly degraded by being thus cramped and confined. The man who wiſhes to be rich, frets at every, the moſt trivial loſs. He who is purſuing

purſuing honour, deſpiſes the greateſt: both theſe never attain their end, and miſs that which is in their power. The man who moderately tries to have enough, looks upon his loſſes as the common lot of mankind; and, while he aims at more, enjoys what he has. The man who makes honour his point, by really deſerving it, knows, that if he miſſes of it, it is not from want of merit in himſelf, but from the natural weakneſs of the human underſtanding; and therefore, though he does not gain the honour he ſeeks, he enjoys the eſteem of thoſe who truly know him, and the applauſe of his own mind; and both the one and the other of theſe men, are open to receive pleaſure from the pleaſure of others, and to enter into any other ſubject or employment. A wiſe perſon will ſometimes conſider, whether there is any thing can be amended in his manner of life and converſation; any thing elſe that he does not do, that would be beſt done; any thing that he does, that would be beſt undone. This would ſoon cut the ſtrong thread that twiſts his mind to one point of view; as it would ſhew him how very fooliſh it is to do all for one end, which end may never be obtained; and, if loſt, will have accuſtomed the mind to dwell upon it ſo much, as to diſable it from truly enjoying what it may. In fine, to keep a diſengaged mind, is promotive of happineſs to

ourſelves and all with whom we live; and it is as much our intereſt as it is our duty, not to be too eager in the purſuit of any one object, nor to let our minds dwell continually on any one ſubject.

ESSAY XI.

IT is a ſatisfaction to the mind of an upright man, that however he may be diſliked, as the hinderance to ſucceſs of any bad deſigns, he is, nevertheleſs, in reality, approved of by the very perſon whom he diſappoints. There are none ſo very depraved, as not to give the preference to virtue, as virtue, though they do not themſelves chuſe to practiſe it. One man intends to defraud another of his right, to blaſt his fame, injure his fortune, or enſnare his daughter. Another man, perhaps a perfect ſtranger to the deſtined victim of deceit, becomes acquainted with the perfidy, and appriſes the injured man of the affair. The evil man, in his wrath, vows vengeance againſt the informer, hates him for diſappointing him, and

ſeeks

ſeeks out another to betray; and yet, at the very moment of paſſion, is that man approving of the upright man's conduct, and conſcience applauds him for what paſſion almoſt curſes him: for he knows the action he intended was unbecoming a man, and that preventing it was a high mark of reaſon and juſtice. Indeed, I have long been of opinion, that not only approbation, but inclination, is on the ſide of virtue. It is called inclination or paſſion, that prompts and drives a man to evil actions: paſſion, perhaps, it may be, but I think better of human nature than to believe it ever really *inclines* to evil. Something, even at the moment of gratification, in the full tide of paſſion, in the whirlpool of pleaſure; ſomething, I ſay, within (more inward than can be diſcerned by ſpectators, and even ſometimes almoſt too feeble to give *pain* to the man himſelf) tells us, there is a better way, a happier way, a more honourable way, than that we are purſuing. Every perſon we meet, who is better than ourſelves, we inwardly honour and envy: nor is there a vicious man in the world ſo bad as not to feel inferior to the man of virtue, whom he may repreſent as dull and inſipid; but there is a corner of his heart that does homage to him; and, if this boaſter was to fall into diſtreſs, he would much ſooner apply to the man he laughed at, than to

the man he laughed with. An upright conduct gains the confidence of thoſe we converſe with; and vice, wrapped round in all its webs, cannot quite conceal that ſpark of heavenly fire that lies within his breaſt. Throw the wickedeſt man that ever lived into ſome particular ſituation, and the centaur will become the man again. But the caſe is, and much to be lamented it is, that few men ever fall into thoſe ſituations that will awaken them: gameſters aſſociate with gameſters, free-thinkers with free-thinkers, drinkers with drinkers, the licentious with the licentious, triflers with triflers. The man of probity, and no wonder, withdraws himſelf from ſuch ſociety, gets to the other ſide of the world, as it were, and leaves human nature the wreck he found it.

That there are men that go round and round, for years after years, in the ſame thoughtleſs courſe of ſinful pleaſures, I fear experience too fully proves; and, while we wonder at the poſſibility, we muſt ſee it realized. But, be the man of the world never ſo ſeemingly ſatisfied with himſelf, never ſo averſe to change, ſtill there are unſeen intervals of reaſon, which do juſtice to the cauſe of virtue. The mind cannot always be on the ſtretch; there muſt be hours of relaxation, when all the faculties unbend, when even Satan ſleeps; then Conſcience wakes, and, if in that happy moment,

moment, the image of a man of worth and virtue riſes up in his mind, he for a moment envies, and "he who envies praiſes."—This ſilent and ſecret homage of vice to virtue, muſt, as I began by obſerving, give every good man pleaſure; he can willingly ſtand the laugh of the multitude, when each individual that compoſe it, at ſome time or other, do juſtice to the cauſe they deride.

ESSAY XII.

THE conduct of man is ſo various on the ſame occaſions, and in the ſame circumſtances, that ſcarce two men ſhall act alike in the ſame ſituation. To an obſerver of human nature, this is no ſmall ſubject for ſpeculation. The faces of men do not differ more than their tempers, nor are their tempers more oppoſite than their deciſions on the conduct to be obſerved in the ſame circumſtances. The moſt oppoſite behaviour is vindicated with the ſtrongeſt arguments; nay, the moſt abſurd conduct does not want reaſons for it by the perſon acting.

It ſhould ſeem by this, as if there was no fixed ſtandard of right and wrong, but that each man is at liberty to purſue the path he has marked out for himſelf. Circumſtances and ſituations are, indeed, ſo very variable, and lie ſo very differently, according to the perſon who meets with them, that no poſitive arbitrary rule can be given to every one; and yet, to an unprejudiced mind it muſt appear, that there is a line by which to guide ourſelves, and that our end ſhould be the ſame, though the means to it differ. To expreſs my meaning in few words, there is a propriety of conduct which ſhould be every one's aim; and whatever be the age, ſex, ſituation, or ſtation, ſtill there is a propriety of conduct ſuited to it, from which we cannot deviate, without renouncing ſome of that dignity which our nature demands from ourſelves, and forfeiting that eſteem which we have reaſon to expect from others. In children, this propriety conſiſts in docility, civility, and good-humour. In youth, in chearfulneſs, induſtry, and indefatigable attainment of whatever they are deſigned for; in modeſty, attention, and unaffectedneſs. In riper years, it ſhews itſelf in ſteadineſs of conduct, ſincerity of friendſhip, coolneſs, greatneſs of mind, and tenderneſs of heart. In old age, it is candour, condeſcenſion, a contracted circle of life, and a ſupporting of virtue.

virtue. Theſe are ſome of its qualities in the general; and, in particular circumſtances, whoever makes this propriety his aim, will ſoon find the path that points to it. In high life, it is dignity without pomp. In the middle ſtate, it is chearful content, without indolence. In the lower walks of life, it is induſtry and dependence, without ſordidneſs or ſervility. In the public affairs of life, it is openneſs, candour, unſhaken integrity, and a ſtrict impartiality. If employed in the cabinet or the ſenate, or if in any manner called upon to ſtand forth to view, ſtill theſe qualities guide the tongue, and guard the heart; or, rather, they are ſo deeply engraven there, that actions and words are but the ſignature of what is thought, and what is felt. In private life, it is exactneſs in the management of our affairs, juſtice in the ſtricteſt line, and generoſity and charity when that line ends. It is to friends ſincerity, to our families the tendereſt affection, to acquaintance civility, to domeſtics ſteadineſs and kindneſs, to our enemies a readineſs to forgive. It is to our king obedience; to our country, the moſt unbounded love.

In particular calls of particular affairs, as I obſerved before, it will be difficult, nay, impoſſible, to lay down rules; yet to inſtance in a few may be of uſe. Suppoſe a young man to be enamoured of

a young woman, is he to overcome all right reaſon becauſe he is ſo? Surely not. She is an object not worthy, perhaps, of his eſteem. Is he not to conſider the unhappineſs he lays up for himſelf, if he indulges his paſſion? Would it not become him better to forſake for a time the dangerous ſpot, and ſeek out other worthier objects of his favour? The ſame may be ſaid to the other ſex: Shall a young woman, becauſe ſhe has ſeen a man ſhe likes, think it impoſſible to ſet her affection aſide, if ſhe judges him unworthy of her eſteem? Is ſhe to have no government of herſelf in this particular, and expect in all others to be perfect miſtreſs of herſelf? Would it not be becoming her own dignity of character, to recollect herſelf, to look forward a little, and to anticipate the conſequences of this haſty affection? Is there a propriety of conduct to be obſerved in all other ſituations of life, and not in this?—this, too, a further advance in which may lead to a ſtate unalterable; when, perhaps, the union of the parties may be as ardently wiſhed to be broken, as it was once to be accompliſhed.

I have often wondered, how this great inequality of behaviour, in this reſpect, in both ſexes, ſhould come about; how often we ſhall ſee ſome men and women, acting with ſuitable dignity and propriety in other affairs of life, and with ſo little

ſenſe and forecaſt in this very important one. I have made human nature a good deal my ſtudy, and have at laſt found out, that, in the beſt education, the ſtricteſt and moſt cautious, it ſeldom or never comes into the head of parents or inſtructors to appriſe their pupils of the dangers they may probably have to encounter in this particular. Young perſons go out into the world, with all their paſſions ſtrong; their heads, perhaps, well ſtored, but with no rein in their hands, to curb the firſt ſally of unruly paſſions. Not love alone, but all the paſſions, want that curb, which an early caution alone can give them. I do not mean to recommend an openneſs of deportment with a frozen heart. No; I would have the heart dilate at every pleaſing object and occaſion; but I would have Reaſon ſtand guard, and not let Paſſion looſe, till it has aſked the queſtion, Is this object worthy? Is this occaſion ſuited to my real feelings? Has not ſome concurrent circumſtances made joy overflow without cauſe; and has not Art lighted up the flame which Reaſon ſhould extinguiſh? If here they pauſe, and find no check from theſe queſtions, then give looſe the reins, and take hold on pleaſure. But, if the enquiry turn out againſt the ſocial joy or tender feeling; if the veil is drawn aſide, and diſcovers Art, Folly, and Wretchedneſs,

neſs, then how will they have cauſe to bleſs that happy ſtop, that made them pauſe on the brink, and mind not the loud cries of paſſion, or the pleaſing feelings of tender regard. Other ſcenes and other objects there are, which will amply repay the momentary diſagreement of paſſion and reaſon: they will unite again, and each add to each a keener pleaſure.

Thus, through every ſtage of life, in every ſituation, propriety of conduct is the greateſt human bleſſing. The greateſt caution, without a good judgment, will be undoubtedly liable to error; but the beſt judgment, without that caution which gives it time to exert itſelf, is uſeleſs. I have known many a very ſenſible perſon do very inconſiderate and fooliſh things; and, in excuſe, he ſays, I did not conſider, or I ſhould not have done ſo: but ſo far from an excuſe is this, that it is a great aggravation. For a man or a woman of confined parts, to do a precipitate thing, or ſay an imprudent one, is excuſeable, becauſe it is pitiable; but, for a perſon with good ſenſe, or at leaſt with a power of having good ſenſe, to act and ſpeak amiſs, from inconſideration, is unpardonable. A friend of mine, who, with an excellent heart, has not, perhaps, the very brighteſt genius, has yet ſo cultivated this art of conſideration, that, among all his numerous acquaintance,

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for he is beloved by every one, he has never given any one offence. In all family quarrels, each party fly to him: he either heals their diviſions, by ſoftening their grievances, or, at the leaſt, ſhews a feeling for each, without either of them knowing the other has entruſted him. Amanda was another inſtance of this ſort of propriety: a habit of reflection had made her acquainted with the human heart, and ſhe ſtudiouſly avoided all occaſions of grieving or hardening it. She was often privately adviſed with on affairs of importance; and, as ſhe had led a very active and variable life, ſhe generally uſed to ſay, I was once much in your caſe; I did ſo and ſo, for ſuch and ſuch reaſons, and it ſucceeded. In ſhort, ſuch was the great circumſpection ſhe obſerved in all ſhe ſaid and did, and ſo conſpicuous was the propriety of her own conduct, during her whole life, that numbers reſorted to her for advice and comfort; nay, perſons very little known to her, would write to her for counſel, in the moſt arduous affairs of life: and, as her life was a bleſſing to all who knew her, ſo her death was felt by many who never ſaw her.

Such characters as theſe dignify human nature; and, while we are ready to cry out, on one hand, Frailty, thy name is Woman, we are awed, on the other, into ſilent admiration, at the perfection

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to which Woman can attain. I cannot here refrain from heaving a ſigh, at the ſad thought of the wide diſtance there is between the poſſibilities of the human race and their uſual attainments. But I will curb the too tender reflection, and only offer one wiſh, that all would ſhew the bright ſide of their character, and be really to the world what nature dictates and what reaſon approves.

ESSAY XIII.

AMONG the various ſpeculations that Eſſayiſts have ventured on the world, there is one which, however they have begun with telling us the doubtfulneſs of, their determination has always ended with giving full coſts of ſuit to one ſide. The ſubject which I at preſent allude to, is that of the pleaſure of the Artiſt and the Connoiſſeur, compared with the mere Man of Nature. After treating this ſubject as a matter of doubt, a writer (who is probably a Connoiſſeur) concludes with a great many inſtances, where

where the Man of Nature is left far behind in pleaſure and gratification. I, who am no Connoiſſeur or Artiſt, ſhall in this paper *profeſſedly* ſtand up for the Man of Nature; that is, ſuppoſing him a man of ſenſe, and as ſuch, in ſome degree, a man of taſte. I take the pleaſure of a man of an incorrect taſte to be as different from that of an artiſt or a connoiſſeur, as the pleaſure of a perſon who is purſuing a happineſs is from that of one who has attained it.

By a Connoiſſeur, I do not wiſh to be underſtood one who is ridiculous in diſplaying his knowledge, but one who really poſſeſſes it. This, I think, may be called fair play. Here then we ſet out together; and, to endeavour to bring proofs to ſupport my opinion (which, however, at beſt, I only mean to hazard as an opinion), I ſhall give an account of two gentlemen whom I lately accompanied in a tour round the environs of London, and to ſome of our capital artiſts in the metropolis. As we wiſhed not to be known, we agreed to go in Mr. Eaſy's coach, which was a plain, eaſy, and convenient one, as the elegant taſte diſplayed in Mr. Bright's would have effectually announced the owner. We ſtopped at a gentleman's, whoſe houſe had been newly built, and his gardens lately laid out. Eaſy cried out, on the approach, how beautiful that is! It is an

elegant

elegant building, and the place promiſes to ſuit it. Mr. Bright was ſilent. On a nearer view, he ſaid, there are ſome capital faults in the architecture; and pointed out to us what they were. We could not but acknowledge his criticiſm juſt. We then proceeded to the gardens: we all equally admired the taſte of the owner, and ſhould have come away with our minds delighted, had not Mr. Bright unfortunately ſtarted, that there was no water, and that a river running through the lawn, would make it compleat; but that it looked very dull without it. My friend Eaſy was vexed, but owned the truth of the obſervation. The next place we drove to was a profeſſed gardener's and nurſeryman; who had taſte enough to plant all his flowers in a well-laid-out garden; his ſhrubs in an extenſive and beautiful ſhrubbery; and his young trees ſo as that imagination could look forward to a large wood. Through all theſe ran walks of neat gravel, and a little purling ſtream was led meandering along, for the purpoſe of watering the various plants. Here Mr. Bright, who is a floriſt, and herbiſt, and treeiſt (if I may uſe the expreſſion), was perfectly in his element; and here, one ſhould think, he would have every advantage of us poor ignoramus's; but 'tis here chiefly I do not yield to him. Finding Mr. Bright and the gardener likely to be pretty

prolix

prolix in their diſcourſe, Mr. Eaſy and I ſtrolled on through the grounds: we ſtopped at every different plantation, feaſting our eyes with the various beauties of the flowers; regaling all our ſenſes with the ſweets of the innumerable different ſhrubs; and liſtening with delight to the multitude of little ſongſters this plantation had brought together. We went on, in an extacy of delight, and admiring the thought of the gardener, who had added beauty to profit; till at length, following the little ſtream, we came to a grotto, through the back of which iſſued the ſpring that ſupplied the rill. The grotto was large, the ſhells curious, at leaſt beautiful, and we ſeated ourſelves in two moſs ſeats, in the receſſes on each ſide the door. After ſurveying the place, and pleaſing ourſelves for ſome time, finding out the different ſhells, in which my friend was no novice, we began to reflect on the various ſorts of lives which the people of England lead. Scarce, ſays Mr. Eaſy, two live in the ſame manner. This man, I dare ſay, has no rival: he ſtands alone, in having found out, that a mere nurſeryman, who is to ſell flowers and plants for the adornment of others grounds, can with theſe very articles render a place of his own equally delightful with thoſe of his purchaſers. He has real merit, and ſeems to have a great and good collection. Juſt as we were

thus

thus regaling ourſelves, and commending the poor nurſeryman, I heard him ſay, in a diſcontented tone, I don't know, Sir, Lord Smellto't, and every body that has been here theſe two years paſt, has admired my collection. Well enough, returned Mr. Bright, but ſome capital things are wanting; however, when you have got thoſe few, it will be a very good collection. As he ſpoke he entered the grotto. I am heartily tired, ſays he. Tired! replied Mr. Eaſy; I think I could live here a week, and not feel any ſenſation but pleaſure. How beautiful this grotto is, Sir! Yes, well enough, returned he. Did you obſerve, ſaid Mr. Eaſy, with what taſte he has laid out the plantations? Yes, indeed, ſaid Mr. Bright, very well; but I was more intent on the ſhrubs, and flowers, and plants themſelves, than at their placing. You know I delight in that ſtudy, and flatter myſelf I underſtand it. But you don't ſeem refreſhed by it, ſaid I. No, ſays he, I am very hot. But we are very cool, and have been in extacy with all we have ſeen and heard; and if you will ſit and cool a little, and ſend away the gardener, we will endeavour to make you find out ſome beauties in this place. One I have, ſays he; there's the yellow carnation, the ſingle-leafed roſe, the infected oak—He was running on at this rate, when Bright, interrupting him,

ſaid,

ſaid, Yes, Sir, I obſerved them all, and can tell you where they ſtand; but I want you juſt now to forget *individuals*, and take the whole place into your mind. Well, well, ſays he, we can ſee it as we walk back, and it's time to be gone. In this manner we went on from place to place, till at length, in the duſk of the evening, we arrived at a gentleman's ſeat, the gloomy appearance of which was not very pleaſing after the lively ſcenes of the foregoing part of the day. It was, however, no doubt, built and deſigned in great taſte. My friend Bright was quite in raptures; he ran through the apartments in extacy, and was high in the praiſe of the whole. Mr. Eaſy alſo admired the building, and the unity of the whole appearance; but his admiration was calm and ſedate. As to myſelf, I ſaw the great knowledge of the Gothic that was carried throughout, but the gloom that very perfection cauſed gave me no pleaſure. I ſtole away from my friends, and went into the garden, and was unfortunately examining a curious exotic, when Mr. Bright joined me:—I ſay unfortunately, for I was in a deep reverie, admiring the infinite goodneſs of that Being, who, in every part of the world, plants herbs meet and fit for the uſe and pleaſure of its reſpective inhabitants;—when Mr. Bright rouſed me out of my contemplation, and ſaid with

a ſmile, clapping me at the ſame time on the ſhoulder, Now, my dear friend, you don't, I dare ſay, know how this plant is propagated, nor what are its peculiarities. Oh yes, ſaid I, I do; I know it's a medicinal herb in it's native ſoil. That, ſays he, may be; but there are four different plants of this ſame ſpecies, two of one ſex, and two of another. I found he was going to give me a genealogical account of the whole ſpecies; ſo I pulled out my watch, and obſerved we ſhould be late in town.

The next morning we agreed to go to the ſeveral artiſts of eminence in town, and to the Muſeum. But not to be further tedious, when I had enjoyed a great deal of pleaſure from the firſt impreſſion of a picture, and a great deal more from Mr. Eaſy's manner of pointing out the beauties of it, Mr. Bright was piercing into all the defects of it, comparing it with others far ſuperior, and pulling us down to diſguſt, when we had got upon the pinnacle of approbation. I do not mean to ſay, he ſaw no beauties; he really was a true Connoiſſeur, and traced excellence in what he ſaw; but he alſo omitted no opportunity of finding a blemiſh; ſo that pleaſure and pain hung in equilibrium through the whole of our perambulations; and though I was pleaſed with the juſtneſs of his criticiſms, yet I could not help

feeling

feeling I ſhould have had more ſatisfaction if I had been alone with Mr. Eaſy. On the whole, when I came home to my lodgings, I found no difficulty to pronounce, that a ſenſible man, who looks on Nature with an enlarged mind, and on her repreſentatives by Artiſts with a liberal one, enjoys more rapture in the one, and more ſatisfaction in the other, than the minute Philoſopher and the exact Critic.

I muſt here juſt obſerve what occurs to me, not pretending to confute what ſeems to be eſtabliſhed by the learned, concerning the nature of plants, which are now declared to be of different ſexes. Were I to conſult the oldeſt book I know upon this ſubject, I ſhould be apt to conclude, that no ſuch thing exiſted; for it is there ſaid, that God created every *living* thing, male and female, but every herb was created with ſeed in itſelf: ſo that, though ſome may bear a ſeed, and others may not, yet the tree that has the ſeed, has it from itſelf, and propagates its kind by itſelf.

ESSAY XIV.

I WAS the other day invited by a friend of mine to go out of town with him, who is generally ſo good to indulge me with ſtaying a day or two with him to enjoy the country at this fine ſeaſon of the year. I am always much charmed with his manner of living, but more with the great pleaſure he takes in it himſelf, which ſeems chiefly to proceed from ſeeing others happy about him, from his own management, as much as from that inward peace which always accompanies the good man. His dependants, numerous as they are, look upon him as a kind of father and their beſt friend; and all the country take the greateſt delight in his converſation, and he is ſure to be not only the moſt agreeable, but the moſt lively man in company. His houſe is elegant and delightfully ſituated, and ſtands on a ſmall riſing with a fine lawn before it commanding a moſt extenſive proſpect; and behind it is a moſt noble hanging wood. Into this wood he led me the evening after I came down, when, after paſſing through many turnings and windings, and ſeeing many

rural

rural buildings, ſuch as cottages, root-houſes, &c. we gained inſenſibly the top of the wood, and entered into a broad green walk, at the end of which ſtands the nobleſt building I ever ſaw; a kind of temple, to which you aſcend by a flight of ſteps, which part in the middle, and lead you to each end of the building; at the fore part of which are four large pillars, in niches in each of which ſtands a figure. The back part of this edifice is in a circular form, with ſeats around it. The four figures repreſent *Religion*, *Nature*, *Wiſdom*, and *Contemplation*. *Contemplation* is a young man ſitting down, his head reſting on his hand, and his eyes fixed on the ground; this figure rather inclines toward *Wiſdom*, who ſtands on his left hand: he is an old man, has a pen in one hand, and in the other a *book half* wrote: the moſt profound gravity with a mixture of perplexity is viſible in his countenance. *Nature* is the moſt beautiful figure I ever ſaw: a woman with her hair hanging down her waiſt, and a looſe robe wrapped round her, that ſeems of her own making, and compoſed of leaves and flowers; her air is elegant and eaſy; her aſpect ſerene and ſmiling: ſhe ſeems to caſt a look towards *Religion*, to whom the figure itſelf rather turns. *Religion* is ſitting down; her countenance perfectly compoſed, expreſſive of the moſt entire ſatisfaction;

ſhe has in one hand the Bible, which ſhe holds out to the other figures, and with the other ſhe points to the inſide of the temple, which my friend calls the Temple of Happineſs.—On turning about at entering this building, you are ſurpriſed with the moſt beautiful proſpect that imagination can paint; the wood juſt below you diſcovering all the ſeats we had paſſed; the houſe, the lawn, and the proſpect beyond, made ſtill more extenſive by the height we had gained.—Here, ſaid my friend, I paſs an hour or two every day, and amuſe myſelf with thinking what each of thoſe figures would ſay to me, if they could ſpeak.——*Contemplation*, I imagine, would ſpeak to me thus: "Man, "hearken unto me; follow not the giddy mul- "titude; they cannot lead you to Wiſdom, and "without Wiſdom you cannot find the way to "happineſs."—*Wiſdom*, I then fancy, would next make his ſpeech: "Though the way to me is "rough, yet you will find pleaſure in my com- "pany; and though not all the knowledge you "wiſh for is within my reach, yet I will ſhew "you the way to the ſeat of happineſs by my "daughter Virtue, who never fails to gain admit- "tance for her votaries."—*Nature*, I think, would thus beſpeak me: "*Friend*, obſerve your "form; it is erect, and every way proper for the "uſes you would wiſh it. You feel yourſelf en-

"dowed

"dowed with the nobleſt faculties; you feel your "ſoul bent on happineſs. Survey that proſpect: "though it pleaſes the eye, though it yields ſuf- "ficient for your body, yet your ſoul is not ſatis- "fied; it ſeems capable of, and to long for, more "refined pleaſures. You know you did not give "yourſelf all thoſe faculties, and this deſire of hap- "pineſs; they muſt therefore be the gift of ſome "more perfect and wiſer Being: to pleaſe him "then muſt be the only way to be happy, and to "keep your nature as perfect as you can, muſt be "the only way to pleaſe him. Follow me, we "ſhall meet with Virtue, and ſhe no doubt will "lead us to happineſs." *Religion*, methinks, would laſt addreſs me, and *ſmiling* ſay, "Thou mortal "and immortal, read this book, and be happy."

I thanked my friend for his condeſcenſion in thus freely communicating his thoughts to me, and aſſured him they ſhould not be loſt upon me. It is with this ſort of communing with my own heart, ſays he, that I fit myſelf to live in the world for others only. He then took a key out of his pocket, and opened a door at the back part of the building, which was ſo well concealed I had not ſeen it: this opened into a ſpacious room which had windows every way, or rather it was all glaſs, except the ſide we entered at; and I found myſelf ſtanding on the brink of a hill, and looking down

into the moſt delightful valley I ever ſaw, richly ornamented with churches, villages, and a noble river that meandered through the middle. Having taken a view of this enchanting proſpect, I ſurveyed the inſide of this glaſs room, and found in ſeveral parts of it tables with implements for various employments, as drawing, geography, mathematics, aſtronomy, muſical inſtruments, &c. ſo that perſons might follow their ſeveral ſtudies without the trouble of bringing the materials with them. Here we found a daughter about fourteen, taking a view of the country below, and a ſon about a year older, ſtudying mathematics, on which he was ſo intent, that he never perceived us till we ſpoke to him, when he cried out to his father, with great joy, that he believed he had found out what they had puzzled ſo much about; but I will not be ſure, ſays he, till you have proved it. I hope you have, ſays my friend; tis time I ſhould leave off, and tis fit you ſhould be encouraged to go on. We then walked up to the young lady, who ſhewed her father the drawing ſhe was about, and, with the moſt eager look, waited his deciſion. He returned it to her, bidding her begin another. This ſeemed to give her ſome uneaſineſs; but he ſoon added, with the moſt affectionate ſmile, "for this cannot be mended." In the middle of the room ſtands a large clock

with

with a dial plate every way, ſo that wherever you are placed you can ſee the hour, which indeed you haye need to be reminded of in this enchanting ſcene. I had almoſt forgot to mention, that the whole ſide of the room we came in at is filled up with books; ſo that nothing is wanting that can employ the mind. We left the young people to purſue their ſtudies, and returned through the temple into the wood, where we met my friend's wife and the reſt of the family come out to meet us. I expatiated to her on the beauties of the place, and the many agreeable things I had ſeen. I am very glad you like them, Sir, ſaid ſhe, with a ſmile that lighted up all her features. It is impoſſible to do otherwiſe, Madam, ſaid I; though perhaps I admire the happineſs you give to others ſtill more than thoſe objects that ſeem to make but a part of your own. Sir, ſaid ſhe, I think the chief employment of our *actions* ought to be the good of *others*, and the chief employment of our *thoughts*, our own eternal happineſs. We are born to live for ever, and the circumſtance of our death is only the diviſion of one part of our being from the other; and, ſays ſhe, if I may be allowed the metaphor, this firſt part is only like the preface to a book, wherein we foretel what we are to be in the greater part of our volume of exiſtence! She then conducted us to a rural building,

ing, where we found a large table covered with fruits of all kinds, and a ſyllabub in the middle, and ſeveral of the neighbours, aſſembled there, waiting our arrival. A little meſſenger was diſpatched to the induſtrious young ones we had left in the temple, that they might come and partake of our repaſt, over which we were all exceeding merry.

I left this amiable family with the greateſt regret, and could not help reflecting how much pleaſure the generality of the world loſe by the wrong direction of their minds, and how ſuited the diſpoſitions of my friends are to every ſtation of life; for it is not their ſituation makes them happy, but the directing their thoughts and actions to juſtice, benevolence, and virtue.

ESSAY XV.

COMING home the other evening a little before my uſual ſupper-time, I ſtrolled into my fields. The ſun was ſunk below the horizon, and the grey twilight came on apace; an owl ſat moaning on a bough not far off, and the village clock ſtruck nine. Not a breeze moved among the leaves; reflection, the conſtant companion of ſolitude and ſilence, awakened in my breaſt ſome tender ſenſations, and brought to my mind the joys that were paſt, and not the joys alone, but the terrors alſo, that were almoſt dead to my remembrance: nature gave way and made me drop a tear for both; but reflection of a better kind ſoon took poſſeſſion of my mind, and led me to conſider that the miſeries I thought on were paſt, and the joys I remembered were an allay to paſt and preſent ſorrows. I looked up and beheld the ſtars lighting up their lamps, and the moon's ſharp creſcent ſtood diſtinct in the ſky. Perhaps I ſhall one day have as clear a conception of thoſe worlds as of this; perhaps I ſhall inhabit one of thoſe ſhining worlds, and I may, at this moment,

ſee

ſee my appointed ſtation. A little time, and I ſhall be as far from this world as I am now from thoſe I view. Each of them, perhaps, holds inbitants that have finiſhed their probationary ſtate with honour, and have obtained the crown of glory. A little while, and all that now oppreſſes me will oppreſs me no more; but all that now delights me ſhall delight for ever: for the mind is ſo pure, that, unleſs defiled by paſſion and prejudice, it will take pleaſure only in things that are pure; whatever is ſo will give pleaſure, and that pleaſure will laſt to all eternity. Though the miſts of error and paſſion may obſcure the bright beams of the ſoul, yet, in her original ſtate, nothing that is not perfect can give her ſatisfaction. Let me then, ſaid I to myſelf, diſpel every thought that taints the divine ſpark within me, and chaſe away from it every thing that diſguſts and diſturbs it; let it remain pure as the fountain whence it flowed; at leaſt, let its wiſhes and its joys be ſuch, that in ages to-come it may have no change to make in either. While theſe thoughts aroſe in my mind, I wandered on beyond my own boundary, till at laſt I was within ſight of the ſea. The waves came ſlowly on, making that kind of even, ſolemn noiſe, that awes the mind into all the wonder and adoration that muſt ever ariſe from the ſight of that aſtoniſhing object. The

calmneſs

calmneſs of the night left the ſea to its own motion, and the waves flowed unruffled to the ſhore, and receded when they touched their appointed boundary.—But the night ſtole on apace, and the moon had ſunk in darkneſs. I haſtened to my home, and, after eating a ſlender meal, retired to my reſt, not unſatisfied with my evening's walk. My mind indeed was ſo well pleaſed with it, that, unwilling to forget it, ſhe called on imagination to aſſiſt her in continuing the ſcene which ſleep had hid from my eyes. I was again by the ſea ſide, when a veſſel appeared in the offing, and by ſlow degrees approached the ſhore. and anchored by the beach on which I ſtood. Inſtead of the noiſe uſually made by ſailors on their coming to ſhore, I was ſurpriſed to find them keep a profound ſilence, though very buſy in the management of their veſſel. While I was conſidering the cauſe of this remarkable circumſtance, an old man of a very venerable aſpect deſcended out of the ſhip, and, leaving his company, advanced ſlowly up to me. I ſhuddered as he came near me; a ſudden chill ſeized all my powers. He looked at me with a calm countenance, and, ſurveying me with an enquiring eye, ſaid—Young man, of what are you afraid? What have you done to me, that renders my approach ſo painful to you? By the concern you are under, I perceive I need not

acquaint

acquaint you that my name is *Time*. You are, I ſuppoſe, ſenſible that you have not always uſed me as you ought; you think I am come to take my leave of you, and are aware that I have it in my power to revenge your neglects. At theſe words I fell at his feet. Riſe, ſays he, and hear me. To all mankind I am the worſt of foes or the beſt of friends: ſome indeed court me more than others; ſome uſe me very ill, while others treat me with indifference: but though my anger riſe not to equal revenge on all, yet none that uſe me either ſlightingly or cruelly ſhall eſcape puniſhment; but to thoſe that uſe me as their friend, that careſs my attendants that fill up my board, that uſe days and hours with friendſhip, and rely on them for their future welfare, to them I ſhall give ſuch rewards as will more than anſwer all their expectation. I am come from eternity, of which that ocean is but a faint reſemblance, and am returning to it again. Toſſed on the billows of the world, I ſtill maintain my courſe, and touch at ſhore whenever I pleaſe, to take in paſſengers to convey them to another world. I am ever preſent, though forgotten or unregarded, with each individual of your world. To you, young man, I am now ſent, to admoniſh you, that it is not the tranſient contemplation of an hour, 'tis not the chance of an evening's walk,

that

that will enſure my friendſhip: theſe are pleaſing to me, and may be uſeful to you, but they are only ſo as they tend to make you cultivate my acquaintance, and employ every aſſiſtance I lend you, to your own particular good, or that of your fellow creatures. I warn you, in a ſolemn manner, not to let our parting moment be the firſt of your acquaintance with my value. An hour will come, when we muſt part never to meet again, when I ſhall have done all I could for you, and muſt then reſign you to that ſentence which your conduct towards me will juſtify. My elder brother will then take poſſeſſion of you, and inſtead of your being empowered to uſe him as you pleaſe (as you now can do me) he will have abſolute power over you. Let not then our parting be bitter, but ſweet unto you. Careſs me, and uſe me as I wiſh to be uſed, as a friend. Let us be innocent when chearful, and not melancholy when ſerious; but let an even temper and ſteady conduct ſecure my beſt countenance while you live, and my friendſhip when we part to meet no more. Farewel! The morn approaches; conſider my words and be wiſe. So ſaying, he walked gracefully from me, and mounting his veſſel, the ſails filled, and he joined the boundleſs ocean.

ESSAY

ESSAY XVI.

TO derive amuſement from buſineſs, and improvement from pleaſure, is not impoſſible to ſuch a mind as man's; but it is reſerved alone for the thinking and the ſpeculative. The man of buſineſs may have his hours of amuſement, but they are ſeparate from thoſe of his occupation; the man of pleaſure may have his hours of reflection, but they are uſually far removed from the ſeat of feſtivity: but to a mind turned for contemplation, the gay ſcene and the buſy one are alike capable of affording the ſweets of ſpeculation. Even his own particular buſineſs or amuſements cannot entirely fill the mind of a perſon ſo diſpoſed, but it will find a chink where to give entrance to ſubjects of intellectual exerciſe. It cannot wholly diveſt itſelf of its propenſity to reflection. There is but one ſubject which is ſufficient to fill, or which can even for a moment engroſs reflection. I mean religion. Religion, indeed, is the proper region of a contemplative mind. It there can dilate itſelf, and as itſelf can be ſet no bounds to, ſo, in that vaſt ocean, it finds none; but

but when it has wearied itſelf in wonder, and run through all the ſubjects which religion affords, then can it be refreſhed from the ſame ſource, and drink of the fountain whence it flows; and, wrapped in admiration and love, mount up to the throne of God, and in imagination join with angels in ſongs of praiſe.

But I am unawares run into reflections of a more ſerious nature than I intended: however, I hope they are not unbecoming, when the mind of man is the ſubject of our thoughts; that inexplicable maze, in which we may wander for years and ages, yet never thoroughly comprehend it. The more we conſider it, the leſs we are able to diſcern the cauſe of that ſeemingly great difference there is in its operation: for, comparatively ſpeaking, few men are of a ſpeculative turn, yet all have reaſon and reflection. But, I ſhould ſuppoſe, it is partly owing to education, and partly to the natural diſpoſition. A perſon of a very buſy, active ſpirit, does not very often reflect deeply; though I know one or two inſtances to the contrary of this aſſertion; but I ſpeak in the general. Neither does one of a very dull, inactive turn, exert himſelf in reflection. But it is uſually found in him whoſe retired education has habituated his mind to think, and who has rather heard of the world than ſeen it; who had, at leaſt, heard of it

before he had ſeen it, and enters it rather to obſerve it than act in it. Such a one goes into the world as he goes into a theatre; to be a ſpectator; to ſpeculate on the perſons of the great drama, on their manners, and on the various characters they ſuſtain; conſidering them as acting and filling up the ſcenes of life in all their different occupations. Not that the man of thought is himſelf always an idle ſpectator; indolence ſeldom accompanies that ſort of perſon, as I have before obſerved: but, though he is buſy, he is not abſorbed in buſineſs; though he is gay, he cannot be diſſipated. Self-poſſeſſion is generally the attendant on this man of reflection, and he rarely is either very rich or very poor. He is too indifferent to be ambitious, and too cautious to ſink into poverty.

Perhaps it is well for the world that no more of them are ponderers: for the love of riches, of power, and of pleaſure, are the three great engines that ſet the inhabitants of it at work. The wheel goes round, and winds one up and lays another low; each in his turn feeling a reverſe of fortune, and ſtriving to gain what another has loſt: for, I ſuppoſe, in the courſe of a century, there is ſcarce a family that has not experienced honour and diſhonour, riches and poverty. A ſpendthrift ſucceeds to a miſer, and a miſer to a ſpendthrift; an honourable man ſucceeds to a baſe

baſe one, and a baſe one to an honourable one: ſo through life a ſteady eye may view the paſſions of men cauſing their fortunes to vary, and good and evil alternately befalling, not each individual, indeed, but each family almoſt, that can come within our obſervation.

This, as it is matter of employment to the mind of man, ſo it ought to be matter of improvement to him alſo; for reflection is of little uſe, unleſs it makes us better as well as wiſer.

ESSAY XVII.

THE enjoyment of our faculties is ſo common a bleſſing, that we are apt to overlook it, till we are reminded of the greatneſs of their value either by being deprived of them ourſelves, or ſeeing others that are ſo. It has been often a point diſcuſſed in converſation, which of our ſenſes we had rather loſe. Some are perſuaded that to be deaf would be the greateſt of evils; others, that the loſs of ſight would be ſo to them. Certain it

is, that deaf people are often very dull, and blind ones very chearful. The reaſons of this difference are many. It is with difficulty we can give any entertainment to a deaf perſon, and mankind love both to give pleaſure and to receive it with eaſe: the deaf are therefore often neglected, and ſit by whole evenings in the midſt of a chearful circle, without any one offering to impart to them the ſubject of converſation that paſſes among them. Both the inattention of the company, and their own incapacity of joining in diſcourſe, depreſs their ſpirits, and, in a courſe of time, add melancholy to misfortune. The blind can enjoy ſociety without giving it much trouble, and can laugh and be merry with the beſt of them. Another reaſon that helps to make a blind man chearful, is, that he can never be alone; his blindneſs requires a companion. A third reaſon that may be aſſigned is, that, as he cannot employ himſelf, he muſt talk, and he that talks will be ſure to have hearers, and he that can hear will be ſure to have talkers. Thus the blind man's circle is numerous and generally merry; the deaf man's is ſcanty and grave. The deaf can walk alone, therefore does not need an aſſiſtant: he is upbraided as troubleſome, while the blind is courted becauſe he can court. It would ſeem hard-hearted, perhaps, to exclude the deaf from ſociety, which, it is apparent,

parent, they ever are ſtriving to ſeem to enjoy, tho' it is not in their power to do ſo: but, I am perſuaded, were ſuch unhappy perſons to draw the circle of their acquaintance within a very narrow boundary, they would be more happy, and in conſequence more chearful; for no doubt every one would find ſome with humanity enough to ſtrive to give them every relief and entertainment in their power, and the gratitude of the unfortunate would amply repay every trouble they could have in affording amuſement to a fellow-creature whoſe caſe might have been their own. The deaf, too, might find relief in books of every kind, particularly in thoſe of a leſs abſtruſe nature; for, perhaps, the loſs of hearing may deaden ſome of the finer parts of the underſtanding, and therefore every thing that ſtrains that ſhould be avoided. They might alſo be deſired to put ſuch remarks as occurred to them, either from reading, or from what they obſerved in company, in writing; which whoever is with them ſhould appear to take pleaſure in reading. This would induce them to read, and be in company with more pleaſure, ſuppoſing that the kind friend who loves and adheres to them will afterwards derive pleaſure from their obſervations. I have ventured to throw out theſe opinions with regard to the deaf, as they ſeem particular objects of our com-

paſſion, though not ſo obviouſly ſo as the blind. Few can paſs a blind perſon without a ſigh, if he is rich, and an out-ſtretched hand, if he is poor; but the deaf muſt be content to bear their calamity in ſilence, and thouſands may paſs them by unregarded. Indeed, Providence has ordained it ſo, that few among thoſe who get their bread are deaf, and that few who are blind are ſuffered to ſtarve. Our ſight meets the poor wretch that has none, and in the moment when we view him, we are ſenſible of the bleſſing he has loſt. But even the blind beggar is ſeldom alone; for though his dog may be his only viſible companion, I believe, few there are but have their jovial one, when the alms of the day are received. But, though I have ſaid thus much in compaſſion to the deaf, and to prove why one is grave, and the other gay; yet I confeſs, that, were it not for the apparent ſuperior comforts in one misfortune to thoſe of the other, I ſhould look upon the loſs of ſight as the greateſt of all perſonal calamities. Indeed, ſo very dear is this faculty to me, that I ſeldom view any object with delight, and not at the ſame time reflect with rapture on the means by which I enjoy it. I ſeldom read a line that brings me pleaſure, without feeling thankful for the bleſſing by which I enjoy it. Were this great misfortune to befal me, I hope I ſhould ſubmit to it as becomes

comes one who knows that He who gave has a right to take away; but more than half my joys would fail me: I could ſurvey the heavens no more! I could ſee the fields, the trees no more!---I could ſee my children no more,---could ſee no more their ſportive plays,---could ſee no more their growth and improvements! Nature ſhudders at the thought. To be deaf, I will acknowledge, is a dreadful lot, and ſhuts out the converſation of our friends; and none but thoſe, perhaps, who experience it, can fully be ſenſible of the misfortune. I would, in that caſe, ſeclude myſelf from ſociety; I would have none about me that would not bear with my infirmity; I would fly the world, and bend my mind to contemplation, to reading, to walking; to every thing that I could enjoy alone, ſuppoſing I was capable of hearing. But all, I know, would not be adequate to one hour's converſation with a real friend. Perhaps, the trial is never more compleat, of who is ſuch, than when, by ſome accidental misfortune, we are deprived of that faculty; as it muſt be a friend indeed, who takes the trouble to give pleaſure to another, without any hopes of a return. The loſs of any of our powers is ſo ſad a circumſtance, that thoſe who enjoy them all, ought to be truly ſenſible of the happineſs, and of the uſe which ought to be made of them.

ESSAY XVIII.

STEALING from a ſet of company one evening, whoſe converſation had ceaſed to be either agreeable or inſtructing, I rambled in deep contemplation on the importance it was to us to cultivate all the faculties with which we are endowed. The birds ſung, and the cattle were juſt looſed from their geers. How pleaſant, thought I, is it to ſee the various animals paſs away their exiſtence in the exerciſe of their ſeveral faculties, and fulfil the duties of their ſtation! The boundary of their time is narrow, and yet how highly conducive to the happineſs of the creature man! how are their moments employed to benefit, ſerve, or pleaſe, that great lord of the creation! yet he, to himſelf unkind, the leaſt endeavours to be uſeful, agreeable, or beneficial, either to himſelf or others. Far be it from me to ſay that none are uſeful; for all, I believe, are more or leſs ſo in the courſe of their lives; but few in proportion are there, who *make* it their *buſineſs*, who eſteem it part of what is required of them, to live in ſuch a manner,

manner, and to do ſuch things, as perpetually to render ſervice or pleaſure to their fellow creatures, or benefit to themſelves. Our time is our great charter of liberty, which if we break or violate, we become diſturbers of the public tranquillity. While we have the command of our faculties, we ſhould conſider them as powers whereby much benefit or much miſchief may be derived to ourſelves or others. Our actions ſhould tend to convince the world, that they proceed from principle, and are not determined by paſſion or intereſt; but by an uniform conduct we ſhould prove that we are maſters of ourſelves, and that our guides are both our hearts and heads. Our words ſhould prove, that no deceit is under our tongue; and the conſiſtency of our words with our actions ſhould evince that we ſpeak the language of truth. Sincerity ſhould guide us, and a pleaſing manner not be forgot: gentle language, joined to a ſtedfaſt heart, conſtitutes a great and good man. But not only in the larger ſcale of words and actions in general ſhould we be uſeful and amiable, but in the minuter ſcenes, in the ſhadier haunts of life, we ſhould endeavour to deſerve the title of Philanthropiſt. Our Creator has formed us with powers to make ourſelves and others happy: in order to do this, we ſhould conſider every one within our reach as having in ſome meaſure

meaſure a claim to our humanity; at leaſt, they ſo far have a claim to it, as never to ſuffer from us in the ſlighteſt degree; and if a poſitive, as well as a negative good, is in our power, we ſhould not neglect the opportunity. Tho', with regard to the other world, we are particularly to look to ourſelves; yet, with reſpect to this, every one has a right to our attention. To endeavour to make others happy, is ſurely moſt becoming a rational being; indeed, it is that power which diſtinguiſhes mankind from the brute creation, and, next to our immortality, is our higheſt honour: nay, it is a proof of it, for if we were all to die like the beaſts that periſh, like them we might eat and drink, and mind only our own concerns, giving this very ſufficient reaſon for ſo ſelfiſh a conduct, "To-morrow I may "die, and ſee you no more." But, as we are immortal, we have a call of a ſuperior nature: we are all haſtening to a world, where reciprocal good offices will make great part of our happineſs. I do not know whether it has been ever obſerved by others, but a little conſideration will convince us, that brutes are never prompted to action merely to make one another happy. It is true, they love ſociety, and indeed are not happy without it; but it does not proceed from the deſire of communicating pleaſure to their companions, but from a ſociableneſs implanted in their nature, and a want of that

contem-

contemplative faculty which enables a rational being to enjoy *itſelf*. But it was reſerved for man alone to have the extatic pleaſure ariſing from giving happineſs to another: he can, even by a ſmile, light up a joy in the breaſt of his companion, and fill it with gratitude and love: he can diffuſe pleaſure to ſociety, and bring chearfulneſs where gloom reigned before: he can taſte the godlike pleaſure of healing the wounded heart, though he ſhould not have the means of letting the oppreſſed go free: he can, by his uniformity of conduct, give countenance and ſupport to his domeſtics, dependents, and friends: in his words he can chaſe away fear, by gentleneſs and courteſy; he can uſe even his thoughts to benefit his own race. In every ſtage of life, in every department, in the humble, as well as in the more exalted line, can this philanthropy bleſs our fellow-creatures: all have it in their power to be a happineſs to thoſe around them; and it becomes beings, who are capable of reflection, firſt to know their powers, and then to exert them. This power of communicating happineſs is amply repaid, repaid fourfold into our boſoms; for we become by it the favourites of heaven and earth, and find a pleaſure here within, that ſoftens every grief, and heightens every joy; for he who gives pleaſure can never fail to enjoy it.

ESSAY

ESSAY XIX.

TO the now enlightened human underſtanding, nothing appears more extraordinary, than that men, eſteemed for their wiſdom, could ever hold it as a mark of courage to put an end to their exiſtence. That an act committed through fear ſhould be called courage, certainly implies a paradox, though at the ſame time there are proofs ſufficient of its reality. The ancients, who ſpoke of ſuicide with honour, and thoſe who actually performed it, could only ſhelter themſelves under the courage required to do the act itſelf, and forgot the cauſe of that courage was a total want of it in regard to the thing it was to deliver them from. Had they directed that courage to the bearing the evils they ſhunned, they would have ſtood the ſhock with honour and dignity; but cowardice with regard to bearing pain, either of body or of mind, made them adopt an opinion which was in itſelf a contradiction to that firmneſs of mind they endeavoured to eſtabliſh by it. But I would aſk from whence ariſe our juſter notions of this extraordinary action? Do we find that any but heathens

heathens ever placed it among deeds of heroiſm? How came Patience with all her healing balms to be crowned with the honours formerly ſacrilegiouſly given to Suicide? Does it not proceed from that fountain of light from whence every truth proceeds? Do we find that the Jews, amidſt all their great calamities, adopted ſo ſtrange a cuſtom? Saul, indeed, died on his ſword; but we know he was far from being a wiſe or good man, poſſeſſed at times with an evil ſpirit. He, in the diſappointed moment of a loſt battle, purſued by his enemies, who would the next inſtant have murdered him, falls on his own ſword, to avoid the diſgrace of dying by a heathen's. Here was no time for conſideration; but the perſons I am ſpeaking of, deliberately perform the act, and call witneſſes to prove their heroiſm in it. Strange, yet ſpeaking proof, that all human wiſdom is vain. One line from the hand of Him who created us, is able to blaſt all the arguments of volumes of the wiſeſt of men. "Theſe afflictions, which are but for a "moment, work out for us a far more exceed-"ing and eternal weight of glory." Here is Patience, arrayed in all her charms, crowned with immortal honour. She invites us to moderation here, that ſhe may feaſt us with a high repaſt hereafter. She ſoothes every grief, holding in one hand the cup of everlaſting life, and ſupporting with

with the other the drooping head of Sorrow. But the knowledge that ſhe has theſe comforts to beſtow, proceeds, as I have obſerved, from that ray of light which darts upon us from above. Surely, then, while we condemn, and juſtly, the miſtaken heathen, we ſhould prove we are worthy of our better knowledge; and, by true courage, ſupport the evils that are the lot of man.

ESSAY XX.

THE thirſt of the preſent age after diverſions is ſo intenſe, that little time is ſpared for affairs of either great or ſmall conſequence. The women conſume half their hours in dreſſing for the amuſements that take up the other half, and though ſleep is now and then introduced, it is ſubmitted to with reluctance; and, I am ſorry to ſay, the men ſeem to eſteem dreſs as a thing of the higheſt importance, both in themſelves and the women. Without endeavouring to convince

convince people that dreſs and amuſements are not the moſt important employments of our lives, nor tend the moſt to give us pleaſure, I ſhall propoſe a ſcheme which occurred to me the other day, by which perſons who devote their lives to pleaſure (as it is called) might be much furthered in their daily labour, and by which they might perform it with greater eaſe to themſelves, and might leſs incommode other people. I would ſet a ſubſcription on foot for building a long, wide ſtreet, long enough for the reception of all thoſe who choſe to give up themſelves to thoſe diverſions that are in vogue: annexed to this ſtreet I would have a circle of buildings, in which ſhould be performed, operas, plays, and concerts, of all ſorts, comic and ſerious, old and new. There ſhould be *dramatis perſonæ* enough to begin one performance as ſoon as the other was over; I mean the ſame kind of diverſion; for I would have all kinds going on at the ſame time: and a door of communication from one place to another, with two galleries, one for all that choſe to go to another place, and the other for thoſe that came from it; ſo that every half hour the amuſement might be varied, if the party thought fit. There ſhould be alſo a communication from houſe to houſe, which ſhould at laſt end in the great circle allotted for diverſions; ſo that all kinds of conveyance would be

be quite unneceſſary, except any ſhould happen to be old, to whom the ſame diverſions were as needful as when they were young; for theſe, a ſedan chair might be kept, and they conveyed in it along the common gallery. I ſhould obſerve, that I would have only one ſide of the ſtreet occupied by thoſe people who know the world; on the other ſide I would place their neceſſary tradeſfolk, and in every houſe juſt oppoſite ſhould live, on the ground floor a hair-dreſſer, on the middle one a milliner, and in the attic a mantua-maker. A bell ſhould go acroſs the ſtreet into each floor, as all thoſe people would be continually wanted, from the hour of waking, at two, till the beginning of the employments, at ten. The important article of eating might be ſupplied from a great cook's ſhop at the back of the houſes; and, as all people of taſte like the ſame thing, it would be eaſy for one general *maitre d'hotel* to be appointed provider for the whole ſociety, each houſe to allow him a large income, which might ſpare them the fatigue of looking over a bill of fare; and, in like manner, all other neceſſaries of life might be provided by a perſon well qualified for ſuch an undertaking: the reſt of their eſtates to be given up entirely to the *amuſement-maker*, who ſhould be thoroughly inſtructed and arrived at the higheſt pitch of knowledge with

with regard to muſic, dancing, maſquerades, ſtage effect, &c. When all that choſe to enter this way of life were ſettled in their habitations, I would take no farther notice of them. The inhabitants of the metropolis might enjoy their liberty, and be permitted to go to diverſions, or ſtay at home, juſt as they pleaſed; and, perhaps, if places of diverſion opened about three or four times a week, they would anſwer to their name.

This my project for the public good, I ſhould think, would be well received; as the knowing ones need not then mix with thoſe that know nothing, and that cannot gueſs whether muſic is good or bad, or a dreſs pretty or ugly: they will then ſee none but thoſe worth their looking at, and talk to none but thoſe that can underſtand them. An odd circumſtance would now and then happen among them, as one of them might die: but as this would be of ſmall importance, as they could eaſily know all the circumſtances of it (for their ignorance in thoſe points is all that makes the buſtle about it among thoſe people); I ſay, as theſe might eaſily be known, they would only then ſend ſomebody out with this uſeleſs perſon, and get a living member in his or her room. The eſtate of the deceaſed ſhould go towards the public fund for the relief of Time, and be appropriated to the maſter of the diverſions, and to the *maitre general*

d'hotel, according to the ſeaſon of the year: if in winter, it might be placed to the eating account, for green peaſe and peaches, &c. the new inhabitant being alſo to join ſtock for all the common uſes above mentioned. How far this in the end may anſwer toward making them happy, I will not pretend to ſay; and as happineſs is not a thing they trouble themſelves about, it does not at all become me to concern myſelf for them. The vulgar part of mankind, who believe there is ſuch a thing, and who wiſh to enjoy it, will take care to procure it by the common, plain, ſimple methods preſcribed by good ſenſe, and procured by moderation.

ESSAY XXI.

I RECEIVED a letter from a friend of mine the other day, telling me he had been very much puzzled, by a ſet of gentlemen who dined at his houſe lately, on a ſubject of high concern; who

who contended that the free-agency of man was incompatible with the foreknowledge of God. My friend ſays, tho' he had never before doubted of either, yet not having conſidered them jointly, he was not prepared to anſwer the arguments they uſed. He has therefore paid me the compliment to deſire I would ſend him my thoughts on the ſubject; withal very handſomely ſaying, that the not being able to anſwer the arguments brought by theſe ingenious gentlemen, had not at all convinced him that they were therefore unanſwerable. A perſon, as he obſerves, may not have conſidered an opinion; but it does not in conſequence follow, that the not being immediately capable of viewing it in all its parts, is a reaſon in to it, for coming and believing it eſtabliſhed paſt contradiction.

Though this is a ſubject rather too ſerious for the lightneſs of an eſſay, yet I hope I may be excuſed treating of it in the manner I anſwered my friend, without offence to thoſe who are more properly qualified to diſcuſs it in a logical or ſcientific manner.

In the firſt place, the argument muſt fall to the ground, if we conſider how very undeniable the two articles are, upon which they found their objection, if we take them ſeparately. Whoever, but for a moment, thinks of the nature which muſt neceſſarily belong to God, muſt know, that fore-

knowledge or preſcience is one of the attributes connected invariably with the very idea of a perfect being. He muſt be juſt as equal to look forward to all eternity, as to look back to all that is paſt. The knowledge of the paſt and future muſt be inſeparable from his nature, and neceſſary to his government of the world; and, indeed, is an attribute ſo generally believed to belong to God, that it need not to be inſiſted upon. The other article, our own free-agency, I wonder the pride of man will ever ſuffer him for a moment to doubt; but, as even that will be given up for the ſake of cavil, let any man but conſider himſelf and his actions unconnected with the opinion in queſtion, and he will find a thouſand inſtances crowd into his mind, to prove he has an agency of his own.—But give me leave to bring one argument: Every other creature that we have any knowledge of, can be minutely deſcribed. Thoſe perſons whom we call naturaliſts, can tell us, with the greateſt exactneſs, the habits and cuſtoms of every different animal: their food, their neſts, their way of living, and every article concerning them is invariably the ſame; ſo that we may be certain, by theſe circumſtances, of what ſpecies they are: and we know alſo, that what they did laſt year, they will do the next; and, were they to live a thouſand years, the ſmalleſt circumſtance relating

lating to them, would never vary. Who can ſay this of man?—ever unlike himſelf, inconſtant in his manners, his cuſtoms, his food, his raiment, and his religion too. Some of the ſavages, perhaps, may ſeem to contradict this, and to be like the animals, regular, and conſtant. But is this owing to an uniformity in themſelves? No, ſurely; but to that want of intercourſe with other nations, which gives them no opportunity to adopt new modes: for we ſee, wherever commerce and freedom is carried, there they ſoon learn to change, and in many inſtances become very different from what we found them. To what then is this to be attributed, but to the freedom of thought and action which is the glory of man. Are not our very vices proofs of our freedom? for, ſurely, if the great Being, who is in himſelf all perfection, and muſt therefore love it, had made us mere engines, he would have made us perfect ones, not blown about by every blaſt, inconſtant, unſtable, never to be deſcribed. Were we children of inſtinct, and not of freedom, what occaſion was there for our paſſions; or, rather, are not our paſſions proofs of our free-agency? Do we not ſay and do to-day what we wiſh unſaid to-morrow? Nay, do we not by our oppoſite actions ſhew our inconſtancy? and inconſtancy and inſtinct can never go together. But this doctrine of free-agency is ſo ſelf-

evident, that it is a kind of inſult upon our underſtandings ſeriouſly to prove it; but a ſtill greater inſult upon them to try to diſprove it. Every man in his own breaſt feels a freedom of thought and will, that contradicts and ſhrinks back from the idea of compulſion.

If perfection then is allowed to belong to God (and the very idea of God carries perfection with it), the attribute of preſcience moſt inconteſtably belong to perfection, and in conſequence to God. If variety and an uncertainty of character belong to man (and that it does every day's experience muſt convince us), then man is a free agent, independent in his actions, and liable to the capriciouſneſs of his own will. Theſe two points being eſtabliſhed, it of courſe follows, that they do exiſt together. That God's foreknowledge and man's free-agency are alike certain, and are now in full force together. When once it is known that a thing *is*, all the ſeeming contradiction in the world cannot prove it *is not*. The inexplicableneſs is in our own confined ideas, not in the thing itſelf. This I ſay with regard to doctrines or facts in general: with regard to this before us, there does not appear to be the leaſt difficulty or contradiction in it, nor does the proof of one diſprove the other. Having conſidered them ſeparately, give me leave to take them together, and

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to bring a proof of their poſſibly exiſting together from our own poor powers. In ſome ſmall, confined degree, we may be ſaid to foreſee. We do from cauſes and effects frequently draw concluſions, that ſuch and ſuch events will be; that ſuch a perſon will do ſuch a thing, or go to ſuch a place: does it neceſſarily follow, that we have it in our power to prevent theſe events; or, if we had it in our power, muſt we of neceſſity exert it, either to forward the action or event, or to hinder it? Surely not. Could we foreſee every event that was to take place from this time to our death, in the family of any one we are acquainted with, does it follow that that family has not free power to act? In the ſame manner we may argue with regard to the Supreme Being towards man: he ſees beforehand how much a man will act: by the attribute of looking into futurity, he knows what every man will do. This is not an exertion of his power, but of his mind, if I may ſo ſpeak; he leaves man to act as he will, but he can foreſee how that will be. 'Tis by this, indeed, he governs the world; for knowing how men will act, he guides the conſequences of their actions, and is prepared (to ſpeak in the language of man) beforehand for every event: ſo that, in the various revolutions of the world, he may finally bring all things to the point he has ordained. Man, with

regard to his own particular, acts as he will; but with regard to the government of the world in general, it is in the hands of Him who alone can manage, becauſe he alone can follow, man in all his various windings and turnings, and foreſee what his capricious mind will do.

Perhaps it may be thought, that, in ſaying this, I argue againſt a particular Providence, which has been a point too much debated:—it is very foreign to my preſent ſubject, and does not in the leaſt interfere with it; for if it pleaſe God to turn particular events to good that ſeemed inevitably bad, it is no argument againſt that general government I ſpoke of above, nor does it make againſt man's freedom of action; becauſe the great Ruler of the World can turn the event of his actions to the contrary of what he intended.

In what degree, or how far it pleaſes our Creator to interfere, and whether more or leſs, according to man's deſerts, are matters of no conſequence to us to know. As long as the great fundamental doctrines of God's being, and our own, are eſtabliſhed, it can be of little ſervice to us to know more; unleſs, indeed, we add the knowledge of that conduct to which it becomes us all to adhere, as ſuitable to that dignity of character which we are called upon to ſupport, in conſequence of our dependence upon ourſelves; I mean,

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in conſequence of the being free to act either well or ill. How can we anſwer it to ourſelves, to take up with an inferior character, when we have it in our power to preſerve one which will be our happineſs, our honour, and our glory, and which will continue and increaſe theſe three great objects, throughout this life and the next.

What can be more ſuitable to the idea we have of God, what more congenial to our own feelings, than to acknowledge our own freedom of will to act as we pleaſe; but to acknowledge, alſo, that God foreſees how we ſhall act, ſo as to plan out his own univerſal government, and in the end bring all things to his own glory?

ESSAY XXII.

SITTING the other evening after ſupper in my great elbow chair by the fire-ſide, and being much fatigued with the varieties of the paſt day, I fell into a profound ſleep, and had the following

lowing odd and particular dream, the inconſiſtencies of which are what muſt always be expected, when the imagination is at work without reaſon to controul it, or outward objects to divert the mind from its purſuits.—Methought I was walking in a very compoſed manner, through a moſt delightful wood, where the cloſe of the evening had ſtilled every warbler, and no ſound was heard, but now and then a parting note, which only made the profoundneſs of the ſilence appear more ſtriking. But as I advanced towards the end of the wood, this ſilence was ſoon exchanged for a confuſed and prodigious noiſe; and I found, on my coming out of it, an innumerable concourſe of men, women, and children, on a very ſpacious plain, all running about as if in great haſte and confuſion, and as if each thought of no one but himſelf, ſometimes flinging down thoſe that ſtood in their way, but never taking any notice of ſo ill-natured an action. I was ſome time before I could diſcover what they were all about. They appeared to me, by the numbers, to be the whole race of mankind: I heard, every now and then, the ſhort ſentences of "There ſhe is!" "I ſee her at a diſtance!" "Such a one has got her!" and the like. Having gained a little riſing, I ſoon ſpied, *ſome way* from this great crowd, a moſt lovely and beautiful woman, in a long white robe,

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the train of which was ſupported by a young nymph, more gaily dreſſed. I ſoon found by her compoſed and engaging countenance, that her name was *Happineſs*, and her attendant's *Pleaſure*. I ſtood ſtill to view this amazing ſight, and was ſurprized to find, that ſome were running quite from her, and yet crying out they had juſt got at her. None were yet come up to her; ſo that thoſe I heard ſay that others *had* done ſo, I found were only deceived by the diſtance, and, following the ſame line they were in, thought their *leader* had reached her, and were ſoon ſurprized to ſink themſelves in a path quite wide of that which led to her. Some courted Pleaſure only, and often tried to ſeparate her from Happineſs; but ſhe remained unmoved, and aſſured them they muſt be firſt acquainted with her miſtreſs, before they could enjoy her company. Happineſs had ſeveral attendants whom ſhe ſent out to guide thoſe to her who were inclined to follow them. Religion, Virtue, and Reaſon, were thoſe guides, and whoever followed them came directly into the ſtraight road that led to her. But all on a ſudden, I heard almoſt the whole multitude cry out "I have her!" "I have her!" I looked immediately, and ſaw at leaſt ten young women, dreſſed exactly as Pleaſure had been, who attended on Happineſs, only ſtill more gaily. Their appearance ſtruck me, as they were

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all very beautiful. They had immediately a whole train of admirers, every one eagerly purſuing that they had fixed on, and I found all of them thought ſhe would lead them to *Happineſs*. One held up a purſe of gold; another, a bottle of wine; another, a crown; a fourth, a fine-made racehorſe; a fifth, the picture of a courtezan; the ſixth, a fine equipage and gay liveries; the ſeventh, diamonds, flowers, and all ſorts of ornaments; and the eighth, a play and an opera bill, and tickets for balls and aſſemblies; and others with all theſe things in miniature for children, and ſo on; each ſhewing with great eagerneſs their ſeveral inducements. The crowd they ſoon divided between them. I turned my eyes again toward Happineſs, and found her quite alone, deſerted, as I thought, even by Pleaſure, who ſeemed to have aſſumed all theſe different ſhapes, which, when any came near enough to catch at, they eagerly put out their hand; but I was ſurprized to find they *continued* looking for her, when I and they too thought they had her in their arms. But, after a ſhort ſurprize and vexation in their countenances, they turned about, and began as eager a purſuit after one of the other enchantreſſes, where they always met with the ſame diſappointment. However, ſome few, after one diſappointment, looked *eagerly* after the true Happineſs, and they were

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immediately accoſted by ſome of her attendants, who conducted them into one of the roads that led directly to her. The true and firſt damſel Pleaſure met them on the way, and ſoon made their journey eaſy and delightful to them; but how were they aſtoniſhed, when they came almoſt to the place where Happineſs was ſeated, to find they muſt paſs through a gate, *before* which too there was a dangerous bridge: but, however, thoſe who advanced near enough to ſee her in full luſtre, were not at all diſmayed, but went over the bridge with ſerenity and firmneſs, though the water under it caſt up a thick humidity, which cauſed a cold ſweat to overſpread their bodies while they paſſed; but, having prayed for aſſiſtance in that cold paſſage, and guides being ſent, the gates were thrown wide open, and they were received with ſoft muſic and hymns, ſetting forth theirs and others praiſes; and they were ſurprized to find ſeveral of their friends there, whom they had formerly left, as thinking them gone quite into a wrong and *melancholy* path.

I was juſt rejoicing at their arrival at and enjoyment of Happineſs, when the diſmal groans of at leaſt a hundred poor wretches called off my attention. I ſoon perceived they had all been led by their different miſtreſſes to the brink of a pit, where ſhe left them without help, upbraiding them

them with their folly; and they fell down together into this bottomleſs pit, lamenting their miſtaken purſuit, and finding, that, had they liſtened to Reaſon or Religion in time, they ſhould have attained their end. Their reiterated pains and miſeries waked me, pleaſed to find, that, though I had not gone through the gate to Happineſs, it was yet in my power to get into the path that leads to it.

ESSAY XXI.

I HOPE my readers will excuſe my obtruding on them a little ſerious advice with regard to the uſefulneſs of the great art of œconomy of time. Precious as time is, nothing is more ſquandered away, nothing which we waſte ſo much of, not even our money, which in this extravagant age I am ſenſible is thrown away in the moſt trifling manner. I was much ſtruck the other day with ſeeing a coachman on his box pull out a book from his pocket as ſoon as his maſter was ſet down at his viſit, and begin reading

reading it very attentively. Whatever were his ſtudies, he loſt no time in them; and I muſt confeſs I thought his example worthy imitation. I do not here mean to recommend a dry, formal, methodical way of ſpending our time; but in general to make ſuch uſe of every part of it, that we may live as long as we can; for how very ſhort would ſome people's lives be, if we were to deduct all the blanks from them which idleneſs has made, and how much longer would they appear than they really are, if we could fill thoſe hours up with ſome uſeful employment! How different would our lives appear on a review of them, were it our wiſh to make them as valuable to others, and beneficial to ourſelves, as might be! The ſhorteſt life would then appear long, when every day could be diſtinctly diſtinguiſhed and recollected; or at leaſt, when, altogether, ſo much had been done by us, that nothing but a conſtant œconomy of our time could have enabled us to get through ſuch a variety of agreeable as well as uſeful employments. We ſhould look upon our time as a ſmall field, to which we are confined for a certain, or, I ſhould rather ſay, an uncertain time. In this our field, which has been given us by our beſt friend, we ſhould take care to cultivate every thing that the ground is capable of producing; every ſpot ſhould be ſown with the ſeed ſuitable to its ſoil. Our ſpade ſhould

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be continually going; we ſhould dig for new treaſures, find out new ſources of improvement, and, when found, ſhould labour to bring them to perfection; we ſhould hough down every weed, not ſuffering it to take root. Theſe will keep us employed a great part of every day, and where the ſoil is moſt fertile, there will moſt cauſe be for our hough. Here we ſhould ſow nothing but good ſeed, nothing but what will be ſure ſoon to yield us a rich increaſe. We ſhould vary our work alſo with the ſeaſons: in our Spring, be putting in our crops, and our plants; in our Summer, weeding and pruning them; in our Autumn, reaping, and receiving the produce and fruit of our labour; and in our Winter, endeavouring to keep alive whatever we have found moſt valuable, and reflecting with pleaſure on all our labours.

In this our little field of time we may have a part of it for our pleaſure ground too. Here we ſhould enter with caution, always taking care to keep that walk ſmooth which leads back again to our more neceſſary and uſeful works, that, while we indulge ourſelves with a little relaxation in it, we may never loſe ſight of, or a reliſh for returning to, the other parts of our field again. And even to this our pleaſure ground we ſhould carry our implements, and keep it free from every noxious weed, filling it only with thoſe delightful fruits

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and flowers, which, when dead, give us no diſagreeable ſenſations.

One piece of advice more let me add, and that is, ſo to diſpoſe our ground, that it may afford us an agreeable proſpect into that beautiful country which our friend will one day or other remove us to, and there preſent us with an eſtate ſuitable to the improvements we have made in the ſmall tract now lent to us.

I have now done with my little allegory; let me then be permitted to add, that this is the ſeaſon of recollection: we are juſt entering on a new portion of time; ſuppoſe we were juſt to ſtop a little, and take a review of the years that are paſt. Let us aſk ourſelves what ſatisfaction they have brought us? what that was which has yielded us any? on what foundation it brought us any? and whether it will always give us the ſame? Theſe queſtions fairly put, and candidly anſwered, we ſhall be able to form ſchemes for our future ſatisfaction, either by purſuing our old methods; or adopting new ones; above all remembering that no day need paſs without yielding us ſome ſelf-ſatisfaction, and affording us ſome agreeable reflections. This would be indeed to have the art of œconomy in time; and idleneſs, that king of miſchief, that preventer of innumerable pleaſures to ourſelves and others, would be for ever baniſhed into exile. A little

recollection at night on the employments of the paſt day, and a little forecaſt in the morning towards thoſe of the enſuing one, would ſave many a ſorrowful reflection, and give many a joyful one. Let, then, the approaching year be entered on with œconomy; and let us remember,

The Spirit walks of every day deceas'd,
And ſmiles an Angel, or a Fury frowns.

Young.

ESSAY XXIV.

I DON'T know any thing that contributes more to our amuſement and good humour in our country neighbourhoods than thoſe vehicles of intelligence the newſpapers: they are a conſtant fund of converſation and animadverſion; whether true or falſe, all is ſwallowed and eaſily digeſted. Among other things, your ſchemers are always ſure to have either oppoſers or abettors. Some of theſe papers have given us a propoſition for

for one, two, or more men to be taken out of every parish, instead of the horrible mode of pressing. I think it a good scheme. However, that is not my present business to determine; but I could not help diverting myself with thinking, as I sat by my fire side, how such an order would be received in my own parish; how they would flock to me with their various petitions: I say to me; for, being a Justice of Peace, I imagine I should be to determine their fates. Some good dames would come with tears imploring mercy for their good man, and assuring me they must all starve without him; others again, no doubt, would be ready enough to think they could do without him, and that he might as well work at the oars as for them, for they never saw six-pence of his money. These thoughts diverted me till I went to bed; and though they did not lie very heavy on my mind, they followed me there, and afforded me much more amusement in my sleeping than my waking imaginations. I was insolent enough to mount a step higher, and take in all ranks of people. I thought I was still in my elbow chair, when I received an order from government to select out of my parish ten able men, without respect to rank, who should be deemed useless to their families, and might be serviceable to the nation. Being much puzzled how to get at the

truth of the firſt part of the order, a friend of mine, methought, propoſed the following ſcheme, which I put in execution. I cauſed hand-bills to be diſperſed, deſiring all the *ladies* and *women* in the pariſh, who had uſeleſs or diſorderly huſbands, to ſend me a memorial of the ſame, ſetting forth the particular grievance; and alſo deſiring they would appear before me, and bring witneſſes to prove the truth of what they alleged. I alſo ordered, that all ſuch huſbands ſhould appear likewiſe, and offer any thing they might have to ſay in their own defence. My pariſh being well ſtocked with the better ſort, I gave them the hearing firſt; and methought there appeared before me more than ſufficient out of every rank to anſwer the demands of government. I collected a ſufficient number of conſtables to keep them all in order, ſo that I might hear each cauſe diſtinctly.

The firſt memorial I received was from rather an elderly lady, ſetting forth that Lord ——, her huſband, was of ſo inſipid a turn of mind, that ſhe had long wiſhed for an occaſion to part; that he would neither play at cards, nor read her a novel; that he was always employed in what he called uſeful employments, which, though indeed they did not directly interfere with her, yet rendered him as to her quite uſeleſs; and therefore ſhe humbly

humbly prayed he might be ſent to be uſeful to his country, for which he always expreſſed ſuch a regard. Her Ladyſhip's waiting maids, another lady, and a young officer, witneſſed for the truth of what ſhe here alleged. I then deſired my Lord to offer his defence. He ſaid he begged to make none; for that ſerving his country would ever be his greateſt pleaſure next to converſing with his wife; but ſince he had long been without that pleaſure, he deſired to back the memorial. A general murmur ran through the whole aſſembly. When I demanded the reaſon, a principal farmer of the pariſh advanced, and begged leave, in the name of the whole country, to intercede that this noble Lord might continue a bleſſing and an ornament to it. There is not, ſays he, one here preſent that does not ſenſibly feel the happy effects of that noble Lord's example and beneficence; he has improved our lands, increaſed our manufactures, relieved our poor, and is beloved by all. A univerſal ſhout was now heard, and I immediately diſmiſſed the *culprit*, exhorting the Lady not to inſiſt on her being unhappy, but to give the noble Lord leave to do this general good, and hoped ſhe would ſoon ſhare in the applauſe. I alſo *whiſpered* my Lord, next time my Lady deſired he would read a novel, to comply, if they were alone.

The next memorial was preſented by a young lady, who ſeemed too young to have faults herſelf, or to ſee them in others. She ſet forth, that, ſince ſhe had been married, which was near a month, ſhe had found herſelf not near ſo happy as ſhe expected: that, as ſhe knew but little of the gentleman beforehand, having ſeen him but a week, ſhe thought ſhe ſhould enjoy all the pleaſures of courtſhip, uſually antecedent to marriage, afterwards, and that ſhe ſhould find all the good qualities ſhe expected, and thought he poſſeſſed more than anſwered on further acquaintance; but ſhe was deceived; he ſeemed to want only her purſe, and that ſhe believed he was as indifferent to her, as ſhe was to him, and therefore humbly prayed, &c. This being a nice caſe, and the lady ſeeming to have little more to add, and no witneſſes to produce, I ordered him next to appear; but he declined it, and only ſent by his ſteward to ſay, that, if his Lady's money held out to pay his previous debts, he had rather ſtay at home, and would endeavour then to begin to love his lady: I therefore adviſed the lady to wait patiently for that time; and ventured to foretel, that, with her attracting perſon and prudent carriage, ſhe might make her huſband her lover; and deſired the ſteward to tell the gentleman, the lady's having delivered her fortune into his hands, was no good

reaſon

reaſon why he ſhould not be happy in her charms.

The next that appeared was a tradeſman's wife, who came forward and preſented her petition herſelf, and aſſured me it was every word of it true. She ſet forth, that her huſband was moſt extremely cruel to her, and uſed her worſe than he did his dogs: that he ſpent his whole time, and the money he got by his trade, entirely in increaſing his ſtock, or in ſome other way as little to her advantage; that, as for her, he would not allow her one ſixpence, either to dreſs her or her daughter as became their *rank*; he often told them, that waſhing or ſtuff gowns ſuited them beſt, and that it was beſt not to ſpend more than they could afford. In ſhort, the grievances they laboured under were truly deplorable; and they therefore prayed he might be ſent on board. The daughter appeared dreſſed in a clean, fine linen gown, and witneſſed to the truth of what her mother had ſaid.

The tradeſman then appeared, and with the moſt earneſt entreaties begged not to be ſent away. His modeſt air, his neat appearance, gave weight to the following allegations: that he had many children, who would be undone, if he was to leave them; that ſome he had 'prenticed out with the little money he had ſaved, but that he

had ſtill more unprovided for; and that, though his wife and eldeſt daughter often wiſhed him to ſpend more on them, he did not think it his duty to regard them, as he thought the other part of his family called for an equal ſhare of his fortune. I applauded his conduct in the warmeſt expreſſions, and told the *ladies*, I thought they had better be contented with thoſe things they at preſent wore, as it might chance, if I ſent the good man away, they might have none at all. They both gave a toſs, and flounced out of court.

The next petition was brought by a middle-aged lady, whoſe appearance ſpoke in her favour, and I was preparing to ſend her good man away directly, when I caſt my eye on her petition, and found the words may *not* be ſent away. I read it, and I found it ſet forth more real grievances than any one yet preſented. It ſaid that ſhe had lived twenty years with her good man, and that he would long ago have been ruined but for her utmoſt care to prevent it: that he was given to gaming, and therefore, if he ſhould meet with temptations on ſhip-board, he would be quite ruined; the only way to prevent it was to make home as agreeable to him as poſſible: that he was alſo given to drinking, and came home at times ſo intoxicated, as to almoſt endanger her life: that, if this inclination ſhould increaſe, he would

would be undone, and might never get the better of it, and might likewiſe die of it: that, moreover, ſhe preſented this petition, becauſe ſhe heard ſeveral of the neighbours intended to ſign one deſiring he might be ſent on board, as he was a troubleſome member of ſociety. Her petition, her amiable appearance, charmed me and all who ſaw and heard her; but I was caſt into ſuch a dilemma how to act, whether to increaſe her quiet or fears, that I awaked.—If my ſleepy thoughts are any amuſement to my readers, I ſhall think my dream fully anſwered.

ESSAY XXV.

I GIVE my readers the under-written in the ſimplicity of ſtyle in which I received it, imagining it would not be of the leſs ſervice to the world.

"Dear Brother,

"IT is with great concern I ſee (and I cannot but ſee) the daily fall of virtue in the world. The living a great deal in it, makes me the more

ſenſible

ſenſible of it. Perhaps, in your part of it, Virtue and Vice have much the ſame ſhare they had a hundred years ago; but, I am ſorry to ſay, there cannot be a doubt that is not the caſe here. I know not whether it be not properer to ſay there is leſs virtue, than that there is more vice; for of the latter there was always much of every kind; but then it was mixed with ſome bright examples of virtue, that ſhone out with the greater luſtre for the blackneſs and deformity that ſurrounded it, like the glow-worm in a dark night. But now you do not hear of any that either exert themſelves in the cauſe of religion, or are by their life a recommendation of it, and a ſilent reproof to the profane and vicious. But the ſin I would chiefly mean, and am the moſt ſhocked at (and cannot help warning you againſt, as that which prevails equally in the country as the town), is the profanation of the holy word of God. We cannot now converſe with any one that does not, upon every occaſion, by way of wit, or to fill up vacancies in their diſcourſe, bring in ſentences of the awful word of God. And (to the ſhame of the age be it ſpoken) there is ſcarce a pamphlet or paper that comes out, but is ſtained with this crime; which goes down with the leſs reluctance, even by ſome otherwiſe conſcientious people, becauſe it was well brought in: and, "upon my

word,

word, the fellow writes well," is generally the commendation of a man that has dared to fly in the face of Heaven, to take its ſacred words, and defile them with his own. But, alas! how will the men that ſpeak or write them on any other than ſolemn occaſions, endure to hear the divine author ſpeaking them himſelf, and requiring an account of thoſe talents of ſpeech and writing which have been entruſted to them. I grow warm, my dear brother, whilſt I write of them, as I do when I hear or read them.

" The plain cauſes of this melancholy growing evil are, I take it, chiefly theſe three; either from never reading or hearing the ſcripture at all, or the not doing ſo with a ſenſe of their divine original; or a third is from the ſhameful and unbecoming manner in which they are read by moſt of the clergymen both in town and country, who, ſome out of a fatal diſregard of them themſelves, ſome from careleſſneſs, habit, or want of conſideration, read them in ſuch a manner as cannot excite reverence or attention in any of their hearers, except thoſe few who beforehand are poſſeſſed with the fear of God, and an awe for his word: while, on the contrary, I am perſuaded, were they read with ſuch ſerioufneſs, ſolemnity, and devotion, as ſhewed the reader of them to be earneſt in what he was about, and to feel the

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weighty truth himſelf, they would (I think they muſt) preſs on the minds of their hearers, and the voice of the Almighty would ſink down into their hearts and ears, though ever ſo unprepared for them. This would remedy one cauſe of this ſin, and be a great means of preventing it. And what a ſhame is it, that the very miniſters of that word ſhould themſelves lead people to the profanation of it? But would people take a little time to conſider whom they are going to hear or read, even the Author of their being, who gave that treaſury of divine knowledge by which they might ſtand or fall; I ſay, would they think this with themſelves, the manner of their being read would be of little or no conſequence. As to that other and moſt ſhameful cauſe of this ſin, I have nothing bad enough to ſay of it; I mean, the never hearing or reading them at all. It is a common, though unpardonable cuſtom; and we cannot wonder (though we muſt lament) that thoſe broken ſentences they have remembered from their youth, or hear now from others, are brought in by them without reluctance on all occaſions, to the diſhonour of their God, their own confuſion, and the diſguſt of thoſe good people who happen to be in their company, or to read their otherwiſe perhaps well-penned and entertaining writings. This neglect of the word of God naturally leads

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men to a contempt of his laws; it looſens the ties of reaſon and duty, which gives freedom to unruly paſſions of every kind, as both are neceſſary to help us to govern them. Would any that but for a moment conſidered, that it has pleaſed his Creator to declare his will to him, for his comfort in this world of ignorance, that he might know how to eſcape his wrath, and obtain his favour, live in a total diſregard of that his goodneſs? Much leſs would he dare to take any part of his awful words, and make them the jeſt and ſcorn of others, or his own? How unbecoming a rational creature is ſuch a behaviour? With what anger muſt the Almighty look down on thoſe who thus abuſe his mercies, turn his ſacred words to ridicule, and, on the moſt trifling occaſions, profane them, and dare his vengeance to pour its wrath on their heads? I wiſh all would conſider before they go to hear the word of God, or when they take it in their hands to read it, that he with whoſe finger it was wrote, is at that inſtant looking down on them, and obſerving the manner in which they receive his words, approving or condemning them and what they are reading. Heard and read with this thought, they muſt have a great influence on their lives; and how happy, how beautiful muſt that life be, that is governed by the rules of a perfect Being! How comfortable muſt they feel, who

are

are guided by an unerring director, whoſe only view in revealing his will was the happineſs of man, who without it would have been a wretched, blind, ignorant creature! How can we be thankful enough for his goodneſs, thus, by the moſt pleaſant ways and paths of peace, to lead us to the moſt perfect bliſs, unutterable, inexhauſtible, and eternal! The bleſſed Lord avert from this nation the evil the abuſe of his mercy deſerves! and that, not by ſuffering with our audacious affronts to his holy word, but by turning the hearts of the profane to conſider their ways and words; by awakening the careleſs to avoid the ſnare laid for them to contemn the ſacred oracles; by making all thoſe, who have a ſenſe of their original, exert themſelves in the cauſe of the religion they teach; by making the miniſters of them read and preach them in ſuch a manner as is moſt likely to work on the hearts of their hearers, even in that plain, eaſy, and earneſt way, by which the divine Author of them may be ſeen, that ſhines in every line with proof irreſiſtible; and by thus leading all to confeſs he is to be adored and obeyed, who has wrought ſuch wonderful works for the children of men. You will, I know, excuſe the freedom with which I ſend you my thoughts, on a ſubject which I was led to reflect more ſeriouſly upon, by the frequent occaſions that I have lately had to lament ſo ſad a crime. Yours, &c."

Pall-Mall.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXVI.

THE degeneracy of the age is the general topic of converſation among the ſerious and thinking part of the world: whether it be really worſe than the preceding ones, I ſhall not make it my buſineſs to enquire; I only wiſh that the declaimers againſt the preſent would find out ſome means of making it better; but I fear that there being no good pen among us to undertake ſuch a work, is but too good a proof of what they allege. I have often wiſhed a revival of ſuch periodical papers as the town was formerly entertained with; but I never wiſhed more heartily for an Addiſon or a Steele than at this time, when there are certain enormities ſtealing into practice; ſome of which are of too trifling a nature, at firſt, to give ſubject for a volume, and others of too ſerious a one, for thoſe guilty of them to read or hear any thing againſt them in a grave diſcourſe upon the ſubject. Such little tracts as the Spectators, Worlds, Guardians, &c. were part of their daily amuſement; and a man was ſometimes ſurpriſed into ſerious reflection, or into acknowledging the beauty of virtue, under the maſk of amuſement.

Of

Of all the follies (I had almoſt ſaid vices) of the preſent age, none ſeems to want reproofs of this nature more than the haſty marriages ſo much in vogue among us. Nothing would afford more ample ſubject for ridicule, or open a wider field for the pen of a good writer; but ſince thoſe are ſcarce, give me leave to ſay a word or two on the ſubject.

The happineſs of mankind in every particular, both in high and low, ſeems much to depend on a right choice of the perſon who is to be our companion for life; and, I believe, if rightly conſidered, moſt of the misfortunes that befal us proceed from careleſſneſs in that affair. But to leave thoſe of lower rank to go on as they do at preſent, let me ſpeak a word or two to thoſe in high life, who have ſet the example of thus becoming a maſter, a huſband, and a father, before they know whether the perſon they have choſe is fit for a wife, a miſtreſs, or a mother. One pretty feature, or one pretty ſaying, is ſufficient to make a man a lover; and a lady is all charming in perſon, or her mind all *ſentiment* and *ſenſibility*, though, for any thing he knows, ſhe may have neither the one nor the other. I am aware that a man is hardly let to ſpeak often to a lady, but he is obliged to *declare himſelf*. Now, though this is another abſurdity of the age, yet is a man to ſacrifice his happineſs

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to avoid the curioſity of others? No man, I think, can too carefully avoid any particularities of words or actions that can give *juſt* occaſions for theſe enquiries from the lady or her friends. I am aware alſo, that a cautious manner of proceeding may ſubject a man to the laugh of his acquaintance; but, I think, he had better let others laugh at him than laugh at himſelf, which he will ſcarely fail to do, for his folly in thinking outward appearances were ſufficient to make him happy: but when he has ſecured his being ſo, by precaution, he may enjoy his laugh at them in return, and become the object of their envy rather than their ſcorn. A friend of mine once aſked me what I thought of the lady he pitched upon for his wife; upon which I returned the queſtion, and aſked what *he* thought of her? Why truly, Jack, ſays he, I never thought much about her, but I think ſhe has a very pretty face. And do you think, ſays I, that a face will make you a happy man; or that it will even appear to be a pretty face, if the lady ſhould chance to have no *other* qualification to recommend her? If you were going to hire a houſe-maid, or a cook, would you not wiſh to know if they were qualified for their office, and would be glad they were of tolerable tempers, and to have their honeſty and ſobriety enſured to you as much as poſſible beforehand? And

will you take a wife with leſs caution than your ſervants, whom you may part with as ſoon as you pleaſe, if they prove unſuitable? But her whom you take to the moſt intimate connection, who is to be your companion for life, you fix upon without the leaſt enquiry or knowledge, either about her temper or turn of diſpoſition—ſhe too, who is to ſhare with you in all your joys and griefs; nay, who will be perhaps the principal cauſe of either the one or the other. My friend heard me out, and did me the honour, and himſelf the ſervice, to take my advice; for, upon enquiry, this charmer proved to be no way worthy of or ſuitable to him. He ever after that was more cautious in his vows, and ſeveral times narrowly eſcaped ſcorching himſelf with Hymen's torch: but having once more fallen a ſacrifice to Cupid, he ſtill ſtuck to my advice, and every thing anſwering to his wiſhes, he is now ſecure in the affections of the beſt and moſt beautiful of her ſex.——Marrying in haſte is generally (at leaſt may be for any thing we know) the forerunner of repenting at leiſure.

I do not mean that every man ſhould be a year or two fixing upon his fair one; but, ſurely, 'tis every one's intereſt, as ſoon as his fancy is hit, to find out, by every means he can, whether ſhe is ſuitable in other reſpects, and whether he may hope for an agreeable companion in her twenty

years

years hence, and be then as unwilling to part with her as he is anxious now to obtain her. Thinking, I am ſenſible, is not the characteriſtic of the preſent age; nor does thought ſo ſoon overtake them in any ſtate at it uſed to do; but ſtill, could a man only think one moment that he muſt think one time or other, he would find he had better do it before he is called to it by the miſeries brought upon him by his own fooliſh choice. 'Tis eaſy to avoid an evil, but it is not ſo eaſy to extricate ourſelves out of one.—Though it is not quite apt to my preſent ſubject, yet I cannot avoid mentioning one, that is, the indulgence young men now a-days allow themſelves in admiring thoſe to whom they can have no pretenſions: the ſlighteſt thing is enough to excite their attention; and while they are falling a ſacrifice to what is ſo contrary to every principle in man, they leave merit and beauty (perhaps far ſuperior) unregarded, where they might indulge themſelves not only honourably, but happily.

Let thoſe who ev'ry fair admire,
Fix where virtue fans the fire.

ESSAY XXVII.

HAVING found, among ſome family papers, the following letter, and thinking it contained ſome uſeful advice, I have tranſcribed it among my own writings.

"HEARING by chance that my dear niece wiſhed for my opinion on a certain point, but had not confidence to aſk it, I take *this* method of giving it to you, that you may more thoroughly conſider wherein you agree, and wherein you differ. I only expect this one thing, that you give me your thoughts as freely in return, and that for the future there may be no diſtance between us, but that we converſe as *friends*, and deliver our opinions to each other as freely as if our ages were the ſame. I am ſenſible, my dear niece, that it was a delicacy in you in not caring to begin upon a ſubject that is different from any that we have yet talked upon: I admire you for it, and would not have you part with that natural modeſty for all the eaſy forwardneſs ſo much in faſhion among the young ladies of the preſent age. *Modeſty* is beauty's

beauty's brighteſt charm: whoever has *that*, will be ſure of admirers, whether ſhe has beauty or not; but thoſe that have none, are diſguſting even with the largeſt ſhare. Thus much I thought proper to ſay, that you may not think it neceſſary to part with that delicacy, in order to be pleaſing to the other ſex. However they may ſeem to be pleaſed with the company of forward girls, there is not one who would chuſe a wife from among them; at leaſt, no man would, that any ſenſible woman would chuſe for a huſband. I am inſenſibly come upon the point that is to be the ſubject of this letter, and ſhall therefore make no other preamble, but immediately give you my thoughts of marriage in general. I look upon matrimony as a matter of indifference; I do not mean *how* it is performed, but *whether*. Moſt people have it in their power to live without it; I mean as to circumſtances: the rich have money ſufficient, and the trades-people are in a way that with induſtry they can procure a competency. There are ſome caſes where it is certainly deſirable in itſelf. Ill uſage is a very excuſable reaſon for running into it, as long as we take care we do not verify the old Engliſh ſaying, *Out of the frying-pan into the fire.*—But I intend ſpeaking of marriage only where people's minds are free and at liberty to debate on the ſeveral arguments

pro and *con*. I called it a matter of *indifference*, becauſe I think any thing is *ſo*, that does not directly or indirectly belong to our one great point in this life, which is the fitting ourſelves for that where we are always to live. That affair we can equally take care of in all ſituations of life; provided we think with Mary, we may act with Martha. This affair, then, which moſt young people think the greateſt of their lives, (as in ſome reſpect it is,) I think an act that ought to be looked upon as not at all material whether it happen or not. If it does not, (and I think the chance againſt us, as there are more women than men,) we ſhall, by acquiring that indifference about it which I have recommended to you, take off from that acrimony which is ſo very obſervable in moſt Old Maids, as if that being ſo they thought their buſineſs in this world had not been accompliſhed, and that fortune had been ſpiteful to them; which they think it excuſable in them to revenge, by being bitter towards all thoſe that are not in their ſtate. And this way of thinking will alſo take off the edge of any diſappointment that may happen to you, as, when you had no pleaſure in the mere being married, you will be reconciled to remain in the ſituation you are in with eaſe and ſatisfaction, and have only then to get the better of thoſe little uneaſineſſes of

heart

heart which muſt be the neceſſary conſequence of being diſappointed of the confidence and affection of one (we thought at leaſt) deſerving of ours. Much may be done to guard againſt being hurt by diſappointments of this kind; and I would adviſe you, my dear niece, always to be upon your guard, not ſo much againſt the inſincerity as the inconſtancy of the men, or rather, I would ſay, that *irreſolution* which prevents even a ſincere lover from determining on the point itſelf. The only time, then, dear Harriot, to conſider about marriage, is when a perſon makes his addreſſes; I do not mean in form; but wiſhes to convey to you that he eſteems and loves you: then it is you muſt guard yourſelf at all points. The firſt thing to be conſidered is the character of your admirer. If his character be any way ſuſpicious, inform yourſelf of the truth, and never be too haſty in your determination: his addreſs may deceive you; he may be either better or worſe than he at firſt appears. This miſtake *your own* good judgment will ſoon find out: ſo I would adviſe you to rely more on *that* than on any one thing elſe; and by that means you will acquire a habit of being *impartial* in your judgment, ſince you will have *yourſelf only* to condemn, if you judge amiſs. If the gentleman prove not what you would wiſh, and either his temper or his principles be ſuch as

you think will make you not chuſe him for a companion all your life, reject his ſuit at once, not with contempt, but indifference; and plainly ſhew him you are as well pleaſed with any other man's or woman's company. If he purſues you, and comes to the point, reject his offers without heſitation: if his principles are your objection, do not ſcruple with civility to tell him ſo; if his temper, particularities, or ſuch like, be your objection, decline his offer without giving any reaſon, and keep up the acquaintance or not, as is moſt agreeable to him. If a perſon becomes your admirer, whoſe good ſenſe, good temper, and good principles, merit your eſteem, then, my dear Harriot, guard yourſelf carefully againſt too ſoon believing that every thing will follow his good opinion of you. Many are the reaſons which may induce him to like your company, without intending always to be in it. He may have even ſome thoughts towards it; but ſo wavering are even the beſt men (and perhaps the beſt men are moſt ſo) in this particular, that, unleſs they conclude the matter ſuddenly, they very often don't conclude it at all. They are very blameable in this reſpect, when they are certain of the ladies character whom they like. I hope my dear niece may never meet with this, but I am only willing to guard you at all points, and eſpecially the only

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one wherein, *you* will, I dare ſay, be in any danger; for I know your goodneſs of heart too well to think a bad man will ever find admittance to your affections; but the ſame goodneſs of heart may make you think that none but bad men would uſe any woman ſo ill as to gain her affections, and then not continue his to her. But a thouſand reaſons may prevent the accompliſhment of what perhaps he much wiſhes; friends, circumſtances, time, may all conſpire, or one may be ſufficient, to prevent it: and 'tis alſo poſſible he may, in the midſt of his attachment, meet with ſomebody that he is ſtill more charmed with, and with a little help from other people he may be turned away from you. When any one is thus aware of all the hinderances that may poſſibly happen to an event that ſeems deſirable, it is with great compoſure they can ſubmit to the diſappointment, if it ſhould come upon them. I call it a diſappointment, for I am not intending to ſtretch human nature further than it will go; for where we have hopes of any good to ourſelves, their being taken from us muſt be uncomfortable: I only am very certain, the degree of diſappointment may be greater or leſs, as we pleaſe. If you was to ſet your heart entirely on any one thing in particular, ſuffer your mind to dwell continually upon it, and perſuade yourſelf that nothing was likely

likely to, or could, prevent its accompliſhment, then the blow muſt fall with great force, that breaks thoſe pleaſing hopes, and blaſts all your future ſchemes and proſpects: but when you have from the firſt doubted of ſucceſs, expected a change, and every little thing has cauſed ſuſpicions to ariſe within you; when you have thought on all other things as conſtantly and as much as if this event was not wavering before you; then the diſappointment ſlightly hits you, you feel a conſciouſneſs of having been in the right to doubt, and you endeavour with better ſucceſs to drive the pleaſing proſpects from your thoughts, and turn them on any other ſubject. This way of conducting yourſelf you will alſo find the moſt effectual way of guarding your *heart* from being too haſtily drawn away by the object of your eſteem and regard. I would never adviſe you, on any account, to ſuffer that to ſlip out of your own keeping, till you are ſure you have got one in return; I mean, returned in ſuch a manner, as at the ſame time to be in poſſeſſion of the hand too, or at leaſt in a certainty of being ſo. Nothing can exceed the folly of what we ſee daily inſtances of, of ſuffering love to creep into the heart, before it is returned by the object beloved. This is a thing I hope I need not guard my dear niece againſt, whoſe diffidence of her own merit would never

never permit her to give her heart, and expect an exchange afterwards. But then is the time of trial to a woman, when a gentleman ſhe is pleaſed with becomes her admirer, and ſeems to ſpeak the language of a ſincere lover in his actions, his looks, and his words. It will, I dare ſay, be pretended by ſome that 'tis then impoſſible any longer to hold out, and that love ought to be the return for love. I grant that confidence, openneſs, an endeavour to pleaſe, and every thing to encreaſe the growing flame, is very allowable, nay right; but it is very poſſible to do all this, and yet guard againſt being too deeply involved in the fetters of love one's ſelf. If our admirer prove ſincere, then our joy will be doubled, and we may give way with pleaſure to the pleaſing ſatisfaction, conſcious that we ſtayed till ſecurity gave a ſanction to our love, and that we did not place our affections on a wrong object. Thus much I thought it prudent to ſay with regard to the manner in which you ought to keep your own heart. As to your behaviour towards men in general, I need not tell you, who are rather apt to be too diffident, that ſome degree of reſerve is proper; at the ſame time I would by no means have it appear that you are ſo after you are become acquainted: and, indeed, at all times I would recommend an eaſy behaviour, as leaſt diſtinguiſhable from the

reſt

reſt of the company, and 'tis always beſt to be no way remarkable.—As to the ſort of perſon whoſe partiality you ſhould encourage, that muſt be left in ſome meaſure to your own taſte, provided there be as little of that as poſſible; for our choice ſhould depend more on judgment than fancy. The perſon of your lover ſignifies nothing at all; provided you make his mind your aim, you will pay little regard to his outward form: his temper, his modeſty, his goodnature, his good principles, will be your chief conſideration. As to his being of an open or reſerved, retired or ſociable diſpoſition, it is this part muſt depend on your own taſte; and perhaps, if you meet with all the other good qualities, you would not care which of theſe is added to them, though, if you are of my way of thinking, an open temper would be moſt pleaſing to you.—As to the rank of your lover, provided he be a gentleman, it matters not whether he be noble or ſimple: a private gentleman with a good heart, is far preferable to a coronet with a bad one; at the ſame time that I would not recommend a general concluſion that title and wickedneſs is the ſame thing: but the appellation of *gentleman* I take to comprehend all thoſe noble, open, generous ſentiments, that equally adorn the public or private ſtation.—As to fortune, that too I would have you think a matter of indifference, provided

there

there is a ſufficiency. A gentleman in diſtreſs I look upon as a moſt melancholy object: I would, therefore, ſtrongly adviſe you againſt running into that error, of thinking that a great deal of love will do with a very little money. I aſſure you, I believe it doubles and trebles the diſtreſs; for how much the more we love, ſo much the more we grieve for the diſtreſs of the objects, and the little fruits of united affection are a daily anxiety upon our minds; and it is a conſtant ſtruggle, whether to make them work for their living, or keep them poor in order to preſerve their rank. This, I reckon, is generally the caſe of thoſe who have ſufficient to keep up a handſome appearance as ſingle men, but ſoon feel the diſagreeable pinching neceſſities of a family. Above theſe ſtrait circumſtances, the happineſs is equal from the leaſt to the greateſt income, only that the more we have, the more others may too; that is, if it is in our power to give. But a woman is ſometimes, and indeed often, miſtaken, in thinking that her huſband's fortune is her own; ſhe has generally little to do with the ſpending of any part of it, but juſt what is allotted to her own private expences, or thoſe of the houſehold, in which I need not to you, I am ſure, recommend the moſt exact care and frugality that is conſiſtent with plenty and ſufficiency. Thus, my dear niece, you have my

free

free thoughts on this ſubject, in moſt of which, I dare ſay, you are before hand with me; and wherever you differ, I deſire you will freely tell me ſo. I ſhall expect your anſwer, and, I am ſure, read it with great pleaſure. I ſincerely wiſh that part of my caution may not be neceſſary for you; but that you will one day meet with a gentleman, who poſſeſſes too great a ſenſe of his great duty to his Maker to deceive you, but who, ſenſible of the happineſs he will poſſeſs by ſuch a union, offers his hand and heart together. This, dear Harriot, is the earneſt wiſh of

Your affectionate Aunt."

ESSAY

ESSAY XXVIII.

HOW happy, did we but conſider it, is man, to have revealed unto him all that is neceſſary to make him approved of by Him on whom alone his happineſs depends! It muſt appear conſiſtent with reaſon, that is, conſiſtent with our ideas of a God who has made us, that we cannot be happy or miſerable but as he pleaſes; and that he will certainly make us either the one or the other, according as we pleaſe or diſpleaſe him. In order, therefore, to give us the means of happineſs, that is, a knowledge of what he approves and diſapproves, he has firſt implanted in our breaſt certain ideas of right and wrong; but as that is not now ſufficient, it being evident that we are imperfect creatures, he has revealed to us the things by which we may obtain his favour, and induce him to make us happy, and the things that will diſpleaſe him, and draw down upon us his diſpleaſure, and, in conſequence, our puniſhment: but as our imperfection, and of courſe our liableneſs to error, muſt continue while we are in this ſtate, it has pleaſed our Creator further to reveal to us, that we ſhall not be finally judged, acquitted, or condemned,

condemned, till after our ſtate here is cloſed; that then our whole account will be made up; and that, accordingly as we have acted in reſpect to the rules he has laid down, we ſhall then be dealt with. And is not this manner of acting agreeable to the ideas we form of juſtice?

It will be aſked, no doubt, Why all the world is not equally dealt with, and this knowledge made known to every perſon? I beg leave to reſolve all ſuch queſtions of why and wherefore into the certainty that a perfect Being muſt do right. His reaſons muſt be far above out of our ſight; and if the actions of a man, whom we account wiſe in his generation, are by thoſe around him ſuppoſed right, though a little out of our power to gueſs at his reaſons for ſome particular actions in his life,—I ſay, if a man can attain this confidence from his fellow-creatures, ſurely, an infinitely perfect Being (who by his being ſo is above our comprehenſion) ought to ſtand in our ſight as incapable of error; and, though his ways are to us unſearchable, and his reaſons paſt finding out, yet we may be certain that it is impoſſible but that all is according to perfect juſtice, and perfect mercy, and perfect wiſdom: and when, by our following that light we have given to us, and acting according to our knowledge, we have approved ourſelves in the ſight of the

the Almighty, then perhaps he may admit us into the ſecret reaſons of his will, and the opening the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge be one great ſource of that happineſs which our Creator will beſtow on the virtuous and obedient. And thus, as it was ſaid on another occaſion, behold to obey is better than ſacrifice, and to hearken than to offer the fat of lambs. To obey the will of God will yield us more pleaſure than to ſcrutinize his government; and we ſhall be in a fairer road to happineſs by ſearching for our own duty, than in wandering after deluſive mazes of ſcepticiſm and doubts. To us to whom it has pleaſed the Creator, at this preſent, to give the knowledge of his will, nothing can be plainer, nor more conſiſtent with our own frame both of body and mind, than the commands and injunctions which he has wrote down. Every precept tends to our happineſs even here; and every thing that is forbidden, guards us againſt thoſe actions that would tend to make us unhappy. Does not juſtice, uprightneſs, integrity, affability, and mercy, tend to make us honoured, reſpected, and beloved; and are not theſe inſtruments of happineſs? And does not fraud oppreſſion, inſincerity, and unkindneſs, tend to make us feared, avoided, and deteſted; and muſt not any one be wide of happineſs, who has not the love of his fellow-creatures? Does not ſo-

briety, chaſtity, and moderation, tend to the ſatisfaction of a man's own mind, and the confidence of his fellow-creatures? And does not inebriety, licentiouſneſs, and extravagance, tend to inquietude of mind and body, and to break the ties of friendſhip, and render a man miſtruſted and avoided? Can light and darkneſs be more oppoſite than an upright, ſteady, amiable diſpoſition, and a ſelfiſh, wavering, and light one? The one ſhews us man as he ought to be; the other ſhews the man reverſed, deſcending from his natural ſtate, and gradually falling into that of a being inferior to himſelf. The one raiſes him, by degrees, to his primeval ſtate, and in the end conſtitutes him an angel; the other ſinks him, by rapid ſtrides, into that ſtate which the devils wiſh him to be in, and in the end he becomes one of themſelves.

If to the practice of every virtue which is commanded, we add a conſtant idea that we are under His eye who has commanded and approves our virtues; if to this we again add that delightful ſenſation of love and adoration towards that Being who has vouchſafed thus to inſtruct us in order to make us happy; and if, once more, to this we add a remembrance of our future account to Him, and that we then ſhall ſtand or fall by our own actions here; we join all that can make us happy, eaſy, and contented.—To be able to look up with confidence

confidence to a perfect Being, and hope for his favour, muſt ſurely conſtitute our felicity, and render the mind conſtantly even, chearful, and ſerene, with regard to itſelf; eaſy and benevolent towards others; and joyful in the idea that the God who made us approves and loves us.

ESSAY XXIX.

THE concern attending on bad actions makes it ſurpriſing, that man, who naturally flies whatever gives him pain, ſhould ſo frequently be himſelf the cauſe of his own ſufferings, and, by repeating actions which he diſapproves, give himſelf continual cauſe for ſelf-reproach, which is the keeneſt of all reproach: but it is this very frequency and theſe repetitions of folly, that in time cauſe the reproach which at firſt attends it to wear off, or at leaſt to paſs over the mind ſo quick, and ſo lightly, that it is ſcarce perceptible, or forgot as ſoon as thought; like clouds in a windy day, whoſe ſhadows paſs off with ſuch ſwiftneſs, the momentary eclipſe is ſcarce perceived. Thus, from careleſſneſs, with regard to ſmall actions done amiſs, we

paſs on to diſregard thoſe of greater moment, and become at laſt inſenſible to the moſt conſtant courſe of the moſt flagrant wickedneſs. So much to be lamented is it, that in our youth we meet with none to encourage our own natural feelings, but that every companion helps the devil to bring on his evil work, by calming the ſorrows of ſelf-reproach, which, if kept up to their natural ſtandard, would prove the ſure means of preventing any ſort of wrong behaviour either to God, our neighbour, or ourſelves. But as this bleſſing is ſcarce to be expected in this degenerate age, there is another which I wonder has not more influence on our conduct; and that is the ſatisfaction, I might ſay joy, of the mind after the performance of a good action: nay, I might ſay, no good *thought* loſes its reward; we feel ourſelves mounting in our own opinions even while we *think* well, and we receive pleaſure even from a wiſh to do ſomething that is good; but, if we actually perform it, the pleaſure laſts long after the action is over, comes acroſs us in our ſorrows, comforts and cheers us: be it ever ſo ſmall, we thank ourſelves for the deed. So great, ſo exceeding great, is the mercy of our God, that we enjoy the fruit even while we ſow the ſeed; it ſprings up as we go along, and bleſſes the mind with joy while the hand is doing the deed. But if we have performed

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a good action, in oppoſition to a ſtruggle to do a bad one, the joy is doubled; we congratulate ourſelves on the eſcape from painful ſenſations, and on the ſatisfaction we have given our mind. The pleaſure alſo ariſing from doing a right action continues much longer than the pain ariſing from a bad one; and this is, I fear, owing to the one being leſs frequent than the other: but be the reaſon of it what it may, it is certainly a great inducement to do as many good actions as we can, and to think as many right thoughts; for if we can frequently give ourſelves ſatisfaction, why not do it? It is certainly in our power to do much more good than we do; and as every the leaſt good, as I have obſerved, brings its reward with it, it is a matter of the greateſt aſtoniſhment, that rational creatures ſhould deprive themſelves of what is in their power; or, to ſpeak plain, that we are not all much better than we are. We deprive ourſelves of the moſt *agreeable ſenſation* in the world, *our own applauſe*, as well as of the higheſt honour, the applauſe of God.——I would by no means be underſtood to provoke ſpiritual pride, of all pride the moſt unbecoming; but I would have nature have its own feelings, and let the pleaſure the mind feels on one good action be its incitement to another, and the diſgrace it feels on a bad action deter it from a ſecond. "God

"created man upright, but he has found out many "inventions," ſays the Wiſe Man. One of his inventions is, to prevent and ſhift the voice of nature, which leads us by the moſt agreeable methods to virtue, and deters us by the moſt natural check from vice. Pleaſure of the pureſt nature follows, and conſequently promotes every virtuous action; and pain of the moſt diſagreeable ſort ſucceeds, and conſequently deters us from every wicked one. Peace of mind follows on the reſiſtance of temptation; and pain of mind, on the omiſſion of a good deed in our power: ſo ſuſceptible is the mind of right and wrong; ſo much is done for us to help us to reſtore the purity of our nature, and bring it again to that ſtate when ſin was far away, and perfection was the nature of man. We abſolutely reſiſt nature, not follow it, when we act contrary to right reaſon; for what is right reaſon, but the voice of nature crying to man, to preſerve her in her natural ſtate, and not degrade her by yielding to falſe impulſes to things ſubverſive of her dignity, contradictory to the tendency of our frame, which ſhrinks at evil, and leans forward to good? And what ſo great an evil as the reproaching ourſelves for being the cauſe of our own misfortunes? What ſo great a good as the conſciouſneſs of having promoted our own happineſs? What misfortune ſo great as diſgracing

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our nature, what happineſs ſo great as the improving it? And, to add to the folly of the one and the wiſdom of the other, eternal happineſs ſucceeds conſcious pleaſure here, and eternal miſery conſcious guilt.

It is great pity, I think, when any perſon, from a good intent, heightens the difficulties of virtue, and makes religion ſeem a hard and dangerous ſervice. It is no doubt an anxious one. What can call for our attention ſo much, as an eternity of happineſs? What can deſerve ſo diligent a conduct as the proſpect of heavenly joys? But as the end is worthy all our care, ſo is the way to it worthy of our attention, even if we had no hopes beyond this life; for there is no one rule laid down in the Goſpel, which does not immediately tend to ſome good with regard to this life. Does not *juſtice*, *mercy*, and *uprightneſs*, make a man *truſted*, *beloved*, and *befriended*; and will not *confidence*, *affection*, and *friendſhip*, make any man ſucceed in his affairs? Will not *injuſtice*, *cruelty*, and *cunning*, make a man *ſhunned*, *feared*, and *deſpiſed*; and can ſucn a man thrive? If he does, it is not becauſe he is a bad man, but becauſe the world don't know it. Common cuſtomers or acquaintance don't enquire into the characters of thoſe they deal with, or they would not chuſe the good man's neighbour. Though the way be narrow,

it is ſtraight; it turns not to the right hand nor to the left, but goes on in one uniform line of doing good and receiving good, and bearing the ills of this life with ſteadineſs and reſignation, till death opens a wider field of action, and we commence aërial ſpirits, free to roam in regions of bliſs, and growing in perfection to higher degrees of happineſs. And is this the thorny road which ſome good men tell us is the way to Heaven? The borders, indeed, of vice grow up with thorns and briars to the edge of the path of virtue; but thoſe who attempt not its bounds, feel not their pricks. The good have their ſorrows indeed, but they proceed not from themſelves, nor are they owing to the path they walk in. The proſpect at the end of their road ſupports them to bear the common, or even the uncommon, ills of life; a ſupport which the bad man knows nothing of. On the whole, the wiſe man, who conducts himſelf according to the conſequences of things, will ſum up the whole matter as his predeceſſor did many years ago, that *all is either vanity or vexation of ſpirit, but the fear of God, and the keeping to his commands.*

ESSAY XXX.

IT is not perhaps more difficult to find, than to be, a true Friend. This may ſeem a ſtrange aſſertion; but I think, the truth of it will appear, if we conſider that few perſons like to receive true friendſhip in the inſtances in which it is moſt ſtrongly ſhewn. A profeſſion of friendſhip alone, and even ſome proofs of it, do not make a perfect friend: to be that, we muſt heſitate at nothing that can ſerve the perſons we mean to be a friend to. We muſt give them our ſincere opinion of their conduct, if we ſee it going wrong; and (though in the moſt delicate manner, yet) we muſt not fail to ſtop them in the progreſs of their moſt eager purſuit, if that purſuit would tend to their prejudice. But where, I would aſk, is the man that would ſee theſe acts in a right point of view? It is no ſmall difficulty, then, to make a man receive true friendſhip: he will ſet down ſuch marks of it to the account of envy, ſpleen, or, at leaſt, of officiouſneſs; and, inſtead of conſidering how many anxious hours it has coſt his friend before he could perſuade himſelf to offer his advice,

vice, he turns him off as a meddler, that has, without caring for his friendſhip, run himſelf into the ſure way of loſing it. How few are there that would ſtop to conſider whether friendſhip was the real motive of the caution he received, and, if it was, to return it by the gratitude which ſuch actions deſerve! and, even, if the advice is neglected, the friend that gave it ought not to be ſo.

I do not think it neceſſary to tell your friend all the faults you ſee in him, but it certainly is one ſtrong proof of friendſhip to endeavour to lead a man to correct himſelf. We are all, alas! ſo prone to think well of ourſelves, that we do not give ourſelves leave to think we can be mended; ſo that, if we were to be told of ſome fault or failing, or wrong conduct in any one particular, we ſhould reſent it as an injury, and not benefit by the information. A true friend is, undoubtedly, a happineſs not eaſily found; but it is difficult, ſurely, alſo to *be* one, conſidering the various tempers and paſſions of mankind: and I believe we muſt content ourſelves with doing good to our friends in a general way, as it ſcarcely will ever be in our power to be a friend in the full extent of the word. I believe we muſt content ourſelves, alſo, with doing all the good we can to others, and not expect any very great marks of

friendſhip

friendſhip ourſelves. If we are in general well received and reſpected, it is as much as the generality of us have reaſon to expect; and by not expecting too much, we ſave ourſelves from many diſappointments. Even from thoſe for whom we feel an affection and a particular regard we muſt not look for an adequate return: we muſt conſider, that, though they ſuit us, we may not ſuit them; they may know ſome more agreeable to their own diſpoſition, whom they love much better than us. In ſhort, the true active friendſhip is ſo rare we ſhall not often meet with it; but a perſon may be a friend without ſhewing every inſtance of friendſhip: we ſhould receive all that offers with gratitude and pleaſure, and, as far as lies in our power, be a friend ourſelves to others.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXXI.

THERE is no one, I ſhould ſuppoſe, that has paſſed through life without receiving injuries. Some have been more happy in that reſpect than others, but, in ſome inſtance or other, we muſt all, more or leſs, have been ſubject to them. The irritation conſequent on a firſt injury, I dare ſay, we all muſt remember. By a further acquaintance with the world, we ſhall find all have had their offences, and that in ſome degree the world is a ſcene of perpetual war. If we obſerve all the little as well as the great ſquabbles of mankind, we ſhall be convinced this is too true. Real injuries there are too many, but thoſe which pride, paſſion, and prejudice, ſee and reſent, are innumerable.

Our religion, indeed, has, happily for us, provided the beſt way of blunting the edge of real injuries; and in ſome caſes nothing but that can ſtifle the riſing reſentment: but, as ſoon as that command of forgiving our enemies has ſunk the paſſions to reſt, there are means of continuing the calm into which they are huſhed, by ſecondary methods.

methods. We ſhould, in the firſt place, think of the injury as little as we can; we ſhould, next, caſt the offenders alſo as much as poſſible from our thoughts, and, when we do think of them, place them in the relation they ſtand in to others, and not to ourſelves, and reflect, that, though they have injured us, there are thoſe to whom they are dear, and therefore the publiſhing or reſenting the faults of a few will be deſtroying the peace of many. Perhaps the injuſtice done us is unknown to thoſe connected with them, who would be deeply afflicted if they found them capable of acting in that manner. By nobly ſtifling then our anger, and concealing the injuſtice done us, we ſave the hearts of many worthy perſons from ſorrow. If the injury is too open to be concealed, ſtill our taking little notice of it lets things go quietly on; and what might by our reſentment be blown up to a ſtorm, ſinks by our behaviour into a calm. In time the injured perſon can look upon the injurer with calmneſs and even compaſſion; and regret that prejudice, paſſion, or pride, had been ſo blended with good ſenſe and good nature as to permit them to be guilty of ſuch injuſtice.

There is no one precept of our religion more calculated to give us comfort and happineſs than that of forgiving offences, even while they are committing, and paſſing by injuries, even while

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we feel them. This is ſo far from littleneſs of mind (conſidering it excluſively from our duty), that none but the moſt magnanimous can practiſe it. That perſon muſt take things in the great, that can overlook injuries even while he feels them, as the common lot of humanity; that they ariſe from the infirmities of it, and that all are not alike capable of governing their paſſions. Little minds fly out on every the leaſt injury, indeed ſee many that are not, rail in every company againſt their foe, tell their tale to every body, and think it becoming them to ſhew they think themſelves offended, blow the flame by reſiſting it, and ruffle themſelves into doing as they have been done by, and making themſelves by this means equally culpable: whereas a calm, dignified mind, feels with poignancy all the ſhafts of envy or malice, but takes it out by gentle methods from his heart, turns from the perſon who threw it, and lives to thoſe who give him a better reception; and, if he cannot, by this peaceable behaviour, melt the injurer down to regret his paſt unkindneſs, he at leaſt has gained a greater conqueſt, the conqueſt of himſelf.

ESSAY XXXII.

IT is a ſad thing that we are all apt to think trifles in our manner and behaviour either of too much or too little conſequence. The mind is ſeldom in a perfect bias, neither inclining too much to the ſerious or the trifling. Perfection, indeed, muſt not and ought not to be looked for in human kind; but ſtill, if it had all the advantages it might have, it would be much nearer it than we are apt to imagine it can poſſibly arrive at. The caſe is, the mind is uſually bent one way, and no care taken to cultivate all its powers, and to expand it ſo as to turn to every point.—Let all things come in their proper order, and be ſet down in our eſtimate of things according to the rules of reaſon. Let ſmall actions be accounted ſmall, though we ſhould perform them with propriety. Let great actions, or, to ſpeak more properly, actions of importance, be performed with that ſerioufneſs and attention which they deſerve.

There is nothing in which the world is more inclined to lead us wrong than in reverſing the reality

reality of things. Young people, juſt come out, as the phraſe is, into the world, are led to think that dreſs, manner, dancing, &c. are things of the utmoſt importance, and thus their more ſober ſtudies are now become of little or none. By degrees they acquire a taſte for theſe little embelliſhments of life, and caſt away the more refined and laſting ones. Time creeps on, and the trifles are quite unbecoming to them, which they laid ſo much ſtreſs upon, before they are aware of it; and they don't know how to regain the long neglected *ſolids* of life. I will allow to youth that it may be excuſed a little frivolity; but I would wiſh it to know what is frivolous, and to know it ſo as to leave it with a good grace at any time when called upon to do ſo, eſpecially when called upon by the advance of years to think of weightier concerns. I will alſo allow that dreſs is even of importance, in reſpect to that propriety which ought ever to attend it. There is a dreſs ſuited to all ages, ranks, circumſtances, and ſituations; and to be dreſſed ſo as to appear ſenſible that we know to what claſs we belong, is a part of that adherence to reaſon which becomes us as reaſonable creatures. Perhaps I may ſeem to treat a matter I call a trifle as a thing of importance myſelf: but I wiſh to be underſtood, that I think of it conſequence, that we, in every reſpect, the leaſt

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as well as the greateſt, act in a manner that ſhews we know what we are; at the ſame time that, from the ſame principle of reaſon, I would wiſh every one to treat trifles as ſuch with regard to the time allotted and the attention paid to them. Careleſsneſs and inattention in dreſs and manners is not neceſſary to ſhew we think great things of importance: the good œconomiſt of time will always find enough to be well and decently dreſſed, and the elegant and faſhionable habit will not be more regarded by the ſenſible part of the world, The time employed on dreſs in the preſent age. without I hope being too ſevere, may be looked upon as one of its greateſt faults; it is in itſelf a uſeleſs and unneceſſary way of ſpending ſo large a portion of time, but the conſequences of it are really ſerious; the thoughts muſt be employed on what we are about, and the preparations for the toilet are as long as the toilet itſelf. This conſumes our time, and leaves a very ſmall portion for better employments; and, indeed, the purpoſes for which all theſe pains are taken uſually ſwallow up the remainder of the day. Though wherever this attention to dreſs prevails, that rank muſt be in the end unhappy, yet it would be leſs to be lamented, if it was confined to thoſe who figure in the high regions of the *ton*, and was not to be found elſewhere; but, alas! all ranks are infected

with the diſeaſe, and the time of every perſon in every ſituation is employed in too large a proportion on this trifling article: we ſee no diſtinction of rank or fortune; and I fear this is an indication, not of our preſent riches, but of our future poverty.

ESSAY XXXIII.

THERE is nothing more pleaſing than a modeſt, ſedate, and quiet manner in converſation, and yet how very few do we ſee that take any pains to attain it! An overbearing, dictatorial, poſitive manner, is more diſguſting than the perſons who habituate themſelves to talk in that manner are aware of. They fancy their opinion will be enforced by a peremptory manner of delivering it, and are not ſenſible that their arguments are almoſt forgot by the remarks that are made upon the manner of ſupporting them. If it is natural to a perſon to have a lively, chearful manner, *that* is certainly not to be wiſhed otherwiſe; it is agreeable in itſelf, and has an agreeable effect on the company preſent, and it will

will not be found to become ever diſliked, as thoſe perſons very ſeldom are overbearing in their opinion; they are too lively to ſtick cloſely and gravely to one ſubject, and had rather give up their opinion than grow warm about it. But what I would remark upon is that loud, dictatorial manner which ſome aſſume: it ſtops all general converſation (which is the thing to be wiſhed in a mixed company), and fixes all to one point, as thoſe loud talkers generally expect hearers, and indeed *muſt* have them. Be their opinion never ſo right, or their arguments never ſo juſt, the ſitters-by muſt wiſh the ſubject dropped, that they may have room to talk too.——Preciſe language is alſo, in my opinion, very diſagreeable; the hearers are thrown at a diſtance, and feel unequal to the converſing with one ſo well verſed in all the proper forms of ſpeech. A propriety of expreſſion and good language is both agreeable and a neceſſary accompliſhment to people in high life, but the uſe of it ſhould ſeem to flow naturally, and not to be the reſult of taking great pains at the inſtant. Good-nature too will dictate, that, if we meet with any perſon not quite converſant in all the parts of ſpeech, we ſhould attend to the matter, and not regard the manner. This, we ought, indeed, to obſerve in reading as well as hearing, and not miſs the benefit of good ſenſe, and

the means of knowledge, becauſe it comes dreſſed in ruſſet cloathing.—Perhaps my reader may think I glance at myſelf: if I did, I truſt I ſhall be forgiven for making this indirect apology for that looſe and unreſtrained manner in my writings, language, and ſubjects, which I am ſenſible is ill adapted to the correct and refined taſte of the preſent age. I did not, however, think of myſelf when I began this remark; but confeſs it occured to me as I wrote it, well knowing how much my pen merits the laſh of criticiſm.

ESSAY XXXIV.

On the Benefits of the Love of Literature.

BESIDES the pleaſure which Knowledge brings to the mind while it is attaining, there are other reaſons which ſhould induce us to allot as great a portion of our time as we can allow of in our youth to reading and learning. If we live to old-age, the chief ſource of delight muſt be the knowledge attained in our youth; and, in the midſt of ſickneſs or trouble, what reſource has

has the mind but from thoſe auxiliaries reading and recollection? But if books are ſtrangers to us in youth, they will not be welcomed in old-age. When years creep on, and debar us of pleaſures attained by activity, what can we ſubſtitute in their room? We want ſome amuſement, and, if we cannot give it to ourſelves, we muſt ſcarce expect it from others; but if, in the days of youth and vigour, a man has laid in a ſtore of knowledge and a taſte for reading, he has provided againſt that laſſitude which is the attendant of age: his confinement ſeems light, when he opens a favourite author; nay, even if he is deprived of the uſe of his limbs, he can for a while forget his calamity in ſome intereſting book. It may be aſked, why perſons muſt read in their youth to be amuſed with reading in old-age? The beſt anſwer to this is experience: the ſlighteſt obſervation will prove the truth of my aſſertion, that a taſte for literature is not to be attained in old-age. By literature I would not be underſtood to mean deep ſtudy, but in general a delight in reading. Thoſe who have employed their youth in a frivolous manner, will meet an inſipid and tireſome old-age: thoſe who have had a well-furniſhed mind, and have been accuſtomed to employ themſelves, will be able to ſuſtain their growing infirmities with patience and decency; will be willing to enjoy the

converſation, and be thankful for the attention of their friends, but will not reſt ſolely on them for amuſement: when they are alone, they can furniſh out many an hour in their library, and be loſt in the pleaſures of their youth; take up a long-neglected author, and greet it like an old acquaintance and ſchoolfellow, and, while the ſubject attracts the mind, the imagination will wander back to incidents that occurred in real life at the time of their firſt reading it. Nor is this attainment more neceſſary for men than it is for women: the girl, and the young woman, who have ſpent their time in a thouſand frivolous employments, perhaps juſt ſuited to the preſent moment (but even then unworthy of much regard), find age advance with churliſh brow, and they become diſturbed and angry becauſe nature will not allow of the amuſement of youth in old-age. They fly to the ſame diverſions, but thoſe afford them not the ſame amuſement, or, if they do, it is ſo much the worſe: the world is ſick of them, if they are not ſo of the world; and at length a time muſt come, when home muſt be their place of reſidence. Here, without reſource in themſelves, they ſend to others to help them ſtill to trifle away their life, too much already trifled away: they grow fretful and miſerable, and are without comfort and without ſociety; there is a vacancy

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in the mind which cannot now be filled up—no employment can give entire ſatisfaction that does not ariſe from a perſon's own choice. But to thoſe whoſe mind has been accuſtomed to reflect and to employ itſelf, to thoſe whoſe time has been carefully divided between the neceſſary and the agreeable occupations of life, to them old-age advances in ſmiles: ſmooth and even is his brow; he ſalutes them with compoſure, and they greet him as a long-expected viſitor; they bear his ſhakes with fortitude, and fly for relief from his neceſſary ſeverities, to the ſtorehouſe of pleaſure, their books.

It is one of thoſe common and wiſe ſayings which we pay too little attention to, that Cuſtom is ſecond Nature; it is moſt undoubtedly true, that habits in time are ſo interwoven with our nature that we can ſcare ſeparate them. Of how great conſequence to us is it, then, that we give ourſelves thoſe habits that will be always uſeful and pleaſing to us, and which we ſhall never wiſh to break through. We ſhould endeavour to habituate ourſelves to exactitude in buſineſs, to the love of books, to amuſe and employ ourſelves without the help of others; that, as age advances, buſineſs may not be a burthen nor books dry food, nor amuſements be neceſſarily brought us by others.

Accuſtom children, even in the tendereſt age, to be ſatisfied without being continually attended to; encourage a contented, quiet enjoyment of its own little playthings and books; and in youth give a habit of employment, and a love of ſelf-amuſement. This will prove of the greateſt advantage as we advance in years, even before old-age creeps on; for the cares of the world never ſit heavier than at the period called middle-age. The fire of youth, of careleſs youth, is over; and the pains and aches which make a man attend moſt to himſelf are not yet come: he will want ſomething to draw aſide his mind from too great ſolicitude about the affairs of life: he does not much care for the diverſions of youth, nor to depend wholly on others for amuſement. If he has not been ſo happy as to cultivate a taſte for literature in his youth, he finds no reliſh, no deſire for it now: he gets four from want of the refinement of the mind; grows ſuſpicious from want of that liberality that always attends on an enlarged underſtanding; and his heart contracts, inſtead of expanding, as he advances in years.

In all ſeaſons, in all ſituations, in all ſcenes of life, the great benefits of the love of knowledge are almoſt impoſſible to be enumerated. I have dwelt the longer on this, becauſe I do not recollect

recollect its having been enlarged upon before: though, no doubt, it is an obſervation that muſt have occurred to every enquiring mind, from the viſible difference between a perſon accuſtomed to reflection and one who is ſurpriſed by every freſh circumſtance in his life;—between one who, in all events, can turn into his cloſet and be compoſed and amuſed, and one who never found any reſource there, but is alive to every untoward event, and unable to blunt the edge of diſappointment;—between the diſpoſition of a learned, and that of an unlearned old-age.

ESSAY XXXV.

IT may ſeem a ſtrange expreſſion, but I would recommend to all, if poſſible, but to young perſons without exception, a habit of acting right. Perhaps this expreſſion will appear leſs ſtrange, if we conſider how often young perſons, and thoſe indeed of all ages, get into a habit of acting wrong. To explain what I mean more clearly:

clearly:—By firſt acting amiſs for want of conſideration, we go on to act amiſs, till cuſtom makes it ſo familiar, that we cannot, without great difficulty, alter our courſe. Careleſſneſs throws us into a wrong line; indolence keeps us there, till habit eſtabliſhes what originated from choice; and we become criminal without being naturally vicious; or, to ſpeak leſs harſhly, we become the children of folly without being heirs to it. A perſon, who, either by a proper education, or by ſome fortunate chance, ſets out right in the world, ſeldom deviates into a wrong way; he is ſenſible that he is where he ought to be, and will not ſtoop to the meanneſs of vice: he finds his inferiors reſpect and love him, and all ranks commend and careſs him; and he is induced to go on till he reaps his reward in the inward peace and approbation of his own heart. When the Wiſe Man ſaid, *Train up a child in the way he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, he did not mean only inſtruct him right, but lead him up to man in a right and proper way; accuſtom him to act with integrity, probity, and diligence; then, when he muſt be left to himſelf, he will not be blown about with every blaſt, nor ſubject to the call of every paſſion, nor to the deſires of every companion, but he will ſtand firm to his principles, and turn not aſide to the right hand nor

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to the left, but walk on in the way that had been made pleaſant to him by cuſtom, and that he had been confirmed in by reflection.

Cuſtom, indeed, will be found to bring every thing eaſy to us; and if we are thoroughly convinced, that ſuch and ſuch modes of acting would be right for us, let us but force ourſelves to adhere to them for a time, and they will grow pleaſant, and even ſeem neceſſary to our happineſs. Let young perſons but ſteadily purſue a conduct which they know to be right, and which they are ſenſible will give pleaſure to their friends; or let their friends, if too young to guide themſelves, but keep them in the right way, and give them a habit of acting, ſpeaking, and thinking with propriety and with reaſon; and it will grow familiar and pleaſant to them for the remainder of their lives: they will avoid much of that ſtruggle between vice and virtue, which is ever the caſe when they have been led to neither. They may have been inſtructed in, and may know, what is right and fit, and been told the difference between vice and virtue, but, unleſs they have been led to paſs by the thorns of vice, and to turn to the way of virtue, when both ways lie before them, they will heſitate to which to direct their courſe; and if ſome companion happen to appear as the champion of vice, they are led to take that ſide, and to go

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on without any particular inclination to be wicked, till they ſee and feel their folly.

A habit of reflection is another article greatly to be wiſhed in young people. It is a great happineſs, and replete with many advantages. Whether we attain this by education, incident, or conſtitution, it is a turn of mind much to be coveted. In education it is too much neglected: children are taught leſſons of virtue by rote, and acquire a great deal of uſeful knowledge; but that knowledge, which of all others is the moſt beneficial, is not always given ſo liberally as could be wiſhed, —I mean the knowledge of ourſelves and others. I do not wiſh to be underſtood, that I think a judgment upon the perſons or manners of people a neceſſary art:—far from it; but I would give the mind a reflective turn, though not a cenſorious one; and, above all, would lead it to be ever reflecting on itſelf. It is certain that a mind that ſcrutiniſes events will generally go back to cauſes; and, as moſt evils proceed from vice, it will be almoſt impoſſible not to deteſt and deſire to avoid the cauſe that has produced ſuch ſad effects. I do not believe that any perſon of a reflective caſt ever did a deliberate wrong action. People may be hurried by paſſions, or led by companions, to do amiſs; but they will be guarded againſt a wrong action, if left to themſelves: and the cauſe of this

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is clearly from the purity that there is in the mind of man, which, when from this habit of reflection it is given ſcope to, will operate on the ſide of virtue; for certain it is, that no one ever made a wrong reflection, or concluded a calm reaſoning, with a reſolution to do amiſs. We ſhould accuſtom ourſelves to form a judgment, not on men, but on things; and we ſhall find both pleaſure and profit by doing ſo.

I knew a young man, who, by an incident in his family, was given an education which led him to a ſpeculative turn of mind. He ſcrutiniſed every event, and read men and manners with a curious eye, though with a benevolent heart. Unfortunate in having ſtrong paſſions, he fell into vice when he was let looſe in the world; but he as often returned from it with abhorrence. Nature and reaſon were at variance for ſome time; but thought preſſed hard upon him, and the judgment he had formed on ſuch and ſuch actions before he entered on the ſtage of life, occurred to him, and reproached him, till folly appeared to him once more in all her native uglineſs. He turned from her at length diſguſted and chagrined; he gained an entire maſtery over his paſſions; and is now ſettled down into one of the moſt agreeable as well as amiable of young men. He gave me this account of the war he had waged with himſelf;

ſelf; and aſſured me, that, with his ſtrong paſſions, had it not been for that reflective turn of mind which he had acquired in his early youth, he could not have anſwered for the conſequences; but by turning inward on himſelf, whenever he had diſgraced his principles, and feeling himſelf unworthy of regard, he ſo heartily deſpiſed himſelf for having fallen into the vices he had ever held in abhorrence, that he gained at laſt the maſtery over himſelf, and with gratitude looked back to that happy event which led him to reaſon and reflect.

Some time ago I inſiſted on the neceſſity of a love of books and knowledge towards making a happy old-age; I beg leave now to mention, that it is laying up in ſtore for ourſelves much comfort to have the mind employed, but that it is alſo doing ſo to habituate the body to activity. By this I do not mean violent exerciſe, which always terminates in extreme lazineſs; but that ſort of general activity, which gives a free circulation to the blood, aſſiſts the animal ſpirits, and in the end proves the ſource of chearfulneſs and a healthy old-age. In order to illuſtrate this aſſertion, I ſhall take leave to give an account of a viſit I lately made to a friend of mine in the country. I rode down to his houſe about an hour before dinner, and found him very buſy planting ſome flowers in his

his garden. I aſked him what was become of his gardener? He told me he was buſy ſowing turnips. He continued planting his flowers till within a few minutes of dinner, when he retired to dreſs, and returned nicely and elegantly clean to ſit down with us to table. It being too hot to walk immediately after dinner, he propoſed a game of billiards; after which he took me to a long room, where all his children were buſily employed: the taſks of the day were over, but they were each buſy in ſome way or other. After viewing this engaging ſight, we took a long walk, and return-ed to the uſual amuſements till ſupper. The next day it rained, and the flower-garden was not to be attended. I dreaded a long, inſipid morning; but my friend led me into a room which was full of mechanical and uſeful implements:—he had been trying, he told me, above a week, to make a particular ſort of table. In the name of wonder, ſays I, why don't you ſend for your carpenter? If I did, ſays he, I ſhould have nothing to do, after my family occupations are over:—this keeps my mind employed, and my body in health. He then ſhewed me all the things he had made with his own hands, and ſome in which his children had helped him. His books and drawings of every kind of thing lay on the table; and I was ſo delighted to have ſomething to do, and ſo anima-

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ted by ſeeing him go ſo heartily to work, that, in the ſpace of four rainy days during my ſtay, I made myſelf a very nice and uſeful writing-box. Sometimes he tried experiments in chemiſtry; ſometimes amuſed himſelf with natural philoſophy: in ſhort, throughout all the hours of the day, not one was idle, nor one quite unuſefully employed. He is drawing towards his grand climacteric, but has the appearance, chearfulneſs, and activity of forty. He carried me to ſee a neighbour of his, who is his direct contraſt. We found him with his great coat on, ſauntering up and down his gravel walk: he aſked us to go in, where we found his wife, with two or three great dirty boys rolling on the floor. I aſked him if he had been riding? He ſaid Yes, he had been to fetch the newſpaper from the next village, which he had read twice over, but could find no news. We ſoon took our leave, though he entreated us to ſtay till his dinner came; for that he ſhould not give himſelf the trouble to make a dreſſing, as he expected nobody. My friend told me in our gallop home, that, as ſoon as dinner is over, he goes to ſleep, and is waked for ſupper, or perhaps for a game of whiſt, if the ſquire drops in. His looks rather outſtrip his age, and he is teſty and unſatisfied with all the world.—I do not intend to inſiſt that all ſhould be carpenters or gardeners; but I think it is con-

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ſonant to reaſon, and will be abetted by experience, that a general activity of mind and body gives a chearfulneſs to the one and a ſtrength to the other, which cannot be procured by any other means. By activity of body, I do not wiſh to be underſtood to mean that hurry and buſtling manner which ſome have, and which gives a flurry inſtead of chearfulneſs to the ſpirits, and takes off from that ſteadineſs which is the reſult of the employments I am ſpeaking of: an employment that amuſes, and an amuſement that employs the mind and the body, is uſeful to ourſelves, and makes us agreeable to others. The laſſitude in the very manner of an idle man is really diſguſting: he yawns out his exiſtence, and grumbles away his time, a diſtreſs to himſelf and to all about him; he has a thouſand real aches and pains, and a thouſand imaginary ones; whereas the active man, even if he feels pain, bears it well, having accuſtomed himſelf to endure inconveniences; and when all his powers are really curbed by age, like an old ſoldier, he can recount his actions, and tell of arts and ſciences to his friends and family, which he learnt in his youth, and put in practice when he advanced in years.

ESSAY XXXVI.

On the Happineſs of right Ideas of Ourſelves and our Capacities.

THE faculties of the mind are capable of contributing ſo much to our happineſs, that we ought to take the utmoſt care to improve them, and to ſtore them with thoſe things that may hereafter yield us comfort, when the powers of activity are over. The memory is one of thoſe faculties, which of all others affords us the moſt ample ſhare of amuſement: our retentive power is a bleſſing not to be ſlighted; but, as it is with many others, it is too often abuſed; inſtead of locking up in our ſtorehouſe ſuch things as will yield us pleaſure in years to come, we fill our preſent time with trifles that are not worth remembering, or at leaſt the recollection of them can give no ſort of pleaſure, but oftentimes pain. If we were wiſe, we ſhould look on all the faculties that we have as helps to make us comfortable in our paſſage through life, and thoſe we have not as preventatives of ſorrow. Not to have it in

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our power to look into futurity, is on many accounts a great bleſſing: how many hours of ſorrow does it avert, and how many days of pleaſure does it afford us? Life in general is ſowed ſo much more thick with thorns than roſes, that, were we to ſee before us that we were ſoon to feel the former, we could hardly take pleaſure in the fragrance of the latter. In the midſt of enjoying our friends and family, could our mind open and ſee ſome darling object expiring in another year or another month, how would it damp our comfort, and ſpoil the preſent moment! It would take from us the few ſolid pleaſures we enjoy, and cauſe us double anguiſh in our pains. In ſome few inſtances it might give us comfort to ſee that there will be an end of a ſorrow which we now endure; but even then it would make us too impatient till that time arrived, and every degree of impatience adds a ſting to grief. On conſideration, then, we ſee that futurity being hidden from us makes us enjoy and bear the preſent better. Could we look into it, we ſhould ſcarce think of any thing elſe; our preſent ſelves would be unregarded in the view; we ſhould be continually taking of our future ſituations, and anticipate by anxiety either the pains or pleaſures we foreſaw we ſhould endure and enjoy. The cloud, then, that hangs over our future deſtiny, is a moſt mer-

ciful darkneſs, calculated to make us happy in the preſent by a becoming behaviour in every ſituation of life, enjoying the pleaſures of it with moderation, knowing they may fly from us, and therefore that it is wiſe not to reſt too much upon them, and bearing our ſorrows with patience, hoping that time may remove or lighten them. —The recollection of what is paſt has many advantages; it helps us to act with more and more wiſdom and prudence, if we will but attend to the leſſons that it gives. It does, indeed, keep ſorrow alive, but ſtill, while it keeps open the wound, it is ſalutary to the health of the mind; it ſoftens the temper, ſubdues the paſſions, and time at length takes from ſorrow its poignancy, and leaves only the benefits which were intended by the pain. The recollection of our happy moments, all will allow, is pleaſurable, at the ſame time that their being *paſt* warns us that thoſe we now enjoy will paſs away alſo, and that therefore we ought to do nothing in them that can take from the pleaſure of their recollection hereafter.

I have hitherto only mentioned the retentive faculty of the mind as conducive to happineſs, and have enlarged upon it from a perſuaſion, that, if we regarded our own future comfort as we ought, and conſidered how much the memory contributes

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to it, we ſhould cultivate with more care thoſe other faculties, the exerciſe of which ſtores that with future pleaſure or pain, according as we uſe them.

Every talent which we enjoy, if employed to purpoſes proper and uſeful, will not only yield a rich harveſt in preſent, but lay into our warehouſe ſuch abundance of amuſement, that our old-age, inſtead of rendering us liſtleſs and uneaſy to ourſelves and troubleſome to others, will ſteal upon us unperceived; and when, at length, we muſt yield, and exertion fails, then memory ſteps in to our relief, we dwell on years that are paſt, and ſee our name unſullied by pride, paſſion, or prejudice. The young people crowd round the aged head of wiſdom, and learn in living characters to be good and great; or, if in too humble a ſtation to be ſought, and the life has been too retired to meet applauſe or blame from others, ſtill does faithful memory yield to one whoſe faculties had been cultivated and talents not neglected, ſweet fruit and ſolid comfort in the recollection of having done all that was his duty to do. If his ſituation had not called him out to ſhine in the field, it will tell him that he had ſat under his own vine in innocence and peace. Though not powerful enough to do a great benefit to his neighbours, yet they had ſhared his aſſiſtance as far as his little

ſtore afforded, and had been comforted in their ſorrows, and joined with in their joys.

There is no ſituation of life in which it is not in our power to do ſome good,—perhaps not deeds of eclat, but ſuch as will be a preſent comfort to others, and a future one to ourſelves. It will ever yield us ſatisfaction, that we have lent a tear to another's miſery, when we ſhed them for our own; and it will ever add a ſmile to our joy, that we have felt pleaſure in another's. It will take a thorn from our aged couch, to reflect, that, if we have received injuries, we have not returned them; that that peace which we now wiſh to receive, we have given to others, when it was in our power to give it; and that, when we feel we want compaſſion, aſſiſtance, indulgence, and ſupport and comfort, we do not need a boon we would not give; but that we have been, and given, all theſe to others, when we needed them not ourſelves.

The more I tread the various ways of mankind, the more I ponder their powers, the more I ſcan their actions, the more I am convinced that 'tis in their power, if they would but think it their wiſdom, to be admired, careſſed, and imitated. It is to be lamented, that they are regardleſs of their own happineſs, and, as it were, unconſcious of thoſe faculties which they poſſeſs, and which are capable of making them reſpected and happy

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at preſent and in future. But the great misfortune of man lies in the not regarding himſelf enough as the cauſe from which muſt ariſe great part of his happineſs or miſery; he expects it to flow either from eventual cauſes or from others, and does not conſider that neither the one nor the other can contribute any laſting pleaſure; thoſe muſt ariſe from his own breaſt, either from the right management of himſelf with reſpect to the events of life, or with reſpect to others; and, above all, in particular, from that ſteady attention to himſelf which guards him againſt the innovations of vice and folly, and opens the paſſage to his heart for every virtue which can make him happy from others, or ſatisfied from himſelf.

When we ſee a perſon reſpected and beloved, we don't, perhaps, particularly know what it is that makes him ſo: it is not owing to any one action, but, in general, to a ſteady, regular manner of life, a juſt and upright manner of dealing with his fellow-creatures. His ear is open to their ſorrows, his hand is open to their wants. He preſerves, through all events of life, a ſteady and uniform conduct, without pride, without oſtentation, without puſillanimity. His converſation is agreeable, and his manners engaging. He is regretted when he leaves his friends, and even his enemies ſmother their malice in his grave.

ESSAY XXXVII.

Men and Events rightly conſidered tend to make us more Happy.

THERE is nothing tends more towards making us happy and contented than attaining to a right eſtimate of men and things. If we expect to find perfection in the former and happineſs from the latter, we ſhall continually meet with diſappointments and mortifications, the only way to prevent which is to open the mind, and ſtretch it to take in the preſent ſtate of men and things as they are.

Reflection will convince us, that human nature is ſubject to a thouſand inconveniences, and that we all ſuffer more or leſs from the ſame cauſes; what is then the lot of all ſhould not be repined at by an individual. A perſon ſeldom gives an account of his misfortunes and diſappointments ſingly: as ſoon as he has told his ſtory, another and another takes up the tale; and, though the circumſtances may vary, yet this may tend to convince us, man is not unhappy by himſelf. It may indeed be matter of ſorrow to a

ſpeculative

ſpeculative mind, that man is born to trouble as ſure as he is born at all; but it will make one that conſiders this lament for mankind, but feel leſs for himſelf. The common lot of humanity is to ſtruggle with the world and ourſelves; and, unleſs we get the aſcendency over both, we are wretched:—we *muſt* be ſo; for the world will give us rubs on rubs, till we become ſore and irritated, and our own minds and paſſions, if unſubdued, will render us unhappy by their agitations and frettings. That we are not to feel real ſorrow, is a doctrine fit only for thoſe philoſophers who by pride attempted to place human nature in a light very unpleaſing, and in a ſtate very unbecoming our weakneſs aud wants; but to make ſorrow ſit as light as it can, and to confine the occaſions of it within a narrow circle, is doing a ſervice to ourſelves, and contributes to our paſſing through life with very tolerable eaſe.

The difference in our education is one of the cauſes which we ſhould aſſign to ourſelves for meeting with ſo great a variety in our acquaintance with the world. Men, eſpecially, ought to ſhare more our pity than raiſe our choler, when they offend us; for how very, very ſeldom is it that they are taught that to curb the paſſions is both their duty and their intereſt? As ſoon as they are out of their nurſery, and begin their Latin and

Greek,

Greek, all thought of any other inſtruction ceaſes. A boy's being an apt ſcholar is all that is thought neceſſary to make him a great man, and equal with the world; he never hears more of duty, or is curbed in the paſſions and inclinations which increaſe with his years: he never is told that he ought to have a command over himſelf, or that it is neceſſary, to all the relations of life in which he may hereafter ſtand, to be of an amiable diſpoſition; if he is ſo, he is more obliged to nature than to his parents or himſelf. This, I confeſs, is an evil; but ſince it is ſo, we muſt, in the courſe of our life, when we meet with ſlights, with diſappointments, with inſults, conſider, that they never were informed that to be kind and obliging was a duty they owe to their fellow-creatures; and that to be benevolent and open-hearted is becoming them as men; and that pride, haughtineſs, and unkindneſs, is a token of a mean and little mind. They may gather theſe principles from books; but they are not uſually the concern of the parents to inſtil. Happy would it be for the world, if the paſſions were rendered as odious at they are prejudicial; but ſince every day's experience convinces us that paſſion and prejudice are the chief guides of man, we muſt not expect to meet with the ſmooth and even current in a ſtream whoſe foundation is rugged and uneven. The

various diſpoſitions of men and women are among the many cauſes that occaſion us diſquiet; we ſhould, then, conſider that ſo it is, and that therefore we muſt not be ſurpriſed when we are ill-treated or oppreſſed. The variety of incidents, alſo, to which we are ſubject, ſhould by a wiſe man be expected and foreſeen; and though to expect an evil will not prevent our feeling its preſſure, yet it will take off the bitterneſs of diſappointment. It is a maxim which we may perhaps find of uſe to us, to expect nothing good, and to fear nothing evil: one will guard us from the ſting of diſappointment, the other will ſupport us when evils actually arrive. In the nature of man it muſt be ſo, that we meet with vexations and troubles; but as we think of them, ſo, in ſome degree, will they affect us. Real griefs there are in the world; we have need of all our fortitude to bear them with dignity: the beſt way to do ſo, is to throw into the ſcale, as trifles, all the leſſer diſappointments and troubles of life, believing they ariſe from the various educations, tempers, and diſpoſitions of men; that all are alike ſubject to the ſame effects from the ſame cauſes, and that we ſuffer but the common lot of humanity: and thus an equal and impartial view of men and events will pour into our bitter cup the antidote ſuited to every ingredient of which it is compoſed.

ESSAY

ESSAY XXXVIII.

On acting Plays.

OF all the inventions that have been found out for the laudable purpoſe of killing time, none bids fairer for effectually anſwering that great end than that of acting plays. This elegant amuſement, ſo well adapted to the delicacy of the fair ſex and the refinement of the other, engroſſes the whole of every perſon's time for a great while before this public exhibition: whoever is deſtined to be a performer in a play, their attention neceſſary towards appearing at all on a level with our common players muſt be ſo great, that no other occupation can be brought in while preparing for this. Time therefore is moſt happily whirled away for many months before; and when the part to be acted is over, the head and heart remain ſo full of the applauſe of the audience on the *inimitable performance*, and of the *ſuperexcellent* taſte diſplayed in the dreſs, that much time is again moſt happily *killed* for many ſucceeding weeks.

The advantages accruing from this amuſement are almoſt too numerous for an eſſay; they would fill

fill a volume, as they indeed will be felt for many generations. The young perſons who employ their time in this way, will be ſo much enamoured with it, that they will inſtil the love of it into their deſcendants, and their name will be remembered as eminent actors and actreſſes to the third and fourth generation. The elegant turn of mind the acting plays gives to young ladies of faſhion cannot be enough admired, and can only be exceeded by that freedom of manners that is introduced by the ſame method. The dreſs, too, that is ſuited to the character to be played, happily takes up a great part of this troubleſome commodity time; and the whole is ſo well calculated to get rid of it, that the encouragers of theſe gentleman and lady plays, muſt be applauded by all thoſe who wiſh to ſee it deſtroyed, or who wiſh well to diſſipation, to the decay of good manners, and to the ſubſtituting in its place diſſoluteneſs and inelegance. By this method of paſſing time, the modeſty of youth, the ſteadineſs of riper years, and the wiſdom of age, are quite extinguiſhed: indeed, there is ſome reaſon to hope, that, if properly encouraged, and a theatre erected in the metropolis, ſome of our firſt families would nearly equal the performers in Covent-garden and Drury-lane; but till this takes place we muſt be contented with theſe private ſeminaries of learning, ſo well adapted to the education

tion of youth and the above desirable purposes. I believe there is not a more bewitching employment than that of acting plays, nor any amusement more delightful than that of seeing one; so that, when it once gets possession of the mind by the indulgence of these private exhibitions, it is not easily eradicated: the persons to be performers, and those permitted to see them, seldom think or speak of any thing else for a long course of time. Notwithstanding the advantages which may accrue from this way of life, which are as impossible to be described as they are numerous, I am of opinion, that the soft and sensitive feeling of youth, its innocent chearfulness, its modesty and reserve, has something in it suited to the ideas we have of it; and that it has charms which the most easy assurance can never equal. I spent a week lately with a family whose children were brought up rather in an old-fashioned style: they were pretty numerous, so that all ages were assembled together; and I must own I thought the confusion of the young ladies, and the timidity of the young men, not unbecoming, when in the midst of company older than themselves: when we were alone, they were gay and sprightly; they sung and danced to admiration, but with so little idea of their own merit, that they received the applauses they met with, not as their due, but as owing to the partiality

ality of their friends. They regarded me as the friend of their parents, and therefore paid me every civility in their power, and were not, according to the preſent more poliſhed manner, laughing and whiſpering at the old curmudgeon. I left their ſociety with regret, but have promiſed to join them again, that I may enjoy religion without preciſeneſs, accompliſhments without vanity, chearfulneſs without noiſe, beauty without affectation, modeſty without reſerve, and knowledge without oſtentation.

ESSAY XXXIX.

On Building and Improvements.

OF all the follies of the age in which we live, none ſeems more unaccountable, becauſe none yields ſo little pleaſure, as that of building, altering, and improving, houſes and places, beyond our fortune. That a man ſhould wiſh in ſome degree to appear equal in taſte to his neighbours, and even ſtretch a little to be more elegant than his father, may perhaps be excuſable,

or, at leaſt, is not matter of much ſurpriſe, during the preſent rage for refinement; but that thouſands ſhould be expended which can never be enjoyed, that a whole fortune ſhould be ſunk to bring the houſe and gardens up to the higheſt pitch of elegance and perfection, and then the owner be under a neceſſity of living the reſt of his life in a foreign country,—this is a degree of folly that is too extraordinary for our belief, did not the fact appear too ſtrongly to be contradicted. There are few counties that do not prove the truth of the aſſertion. This age is undoubtedly an age of improvements: it is the univerſal foible of the great and the little, not to be ſatisfied with things as they are; every cottage you paſs by is improving; the pooreſt of them all has a bit of new ſtuck on to it, with a bow window; and the little compact regular parſonage is diſtorted by the addition of a new eating-room, it being *impoſſible* to eat in the ſame room that has ſerved many an able man to eat very good beef and pudding in for years paſt. The mereſt hedge alehouſe has a ſaſh-window parlour, and it is *fitted up* in taſte. If all this can be done without injury to yourſelves or your family, by all means, be as elegant and new as you can; but if a child's portion is the coſt of the bow-window parlour, if a wife's future maintenance is ſunk

in the new eating-room, let humanity at leaſt, if not wiſdom, make you content with the tidy chamber, and the brown parlour:—but, above all things, do not exchange the comfort of enjoying your family and friends in a place a little leſs complete, for the dear-bought vanity of a place to be *ſeen*, while you are wandering on the continent in a new world, without money, without friends, and without reſpect.—Surely it is but prudent wiſdom to ſit down and count the coſt whether a man be able to complete the plan he wiſhes: did he do this, it would prevent his being ſubjected to the laugh of every by-ſtander, and to the ſickneſs of his own heart. A little conſideration only is neceſſary to make a man foreſee, that, with an income of two thouſand pounds, he cannot lay out ten; that, with one of two hundred, he cannot lay out five; unleſs he will take the reſolution to live for ſome years (during the expenditure) in a very retired and frugal manner, till the work is completed:—but to finiſh the work and then not enjoy it, is really a folly to be deſpiſed, though pitied.

There ſhould be in every one ſuch a ſeated principle of juſtice, that the moſt alluring temptations ſhould not ſhake it. Children give up ſolid comforts for toys and trifles; but, alas! this unguarded folly leaves us not in riper years,—we

give to pleaſure what is due to juſtice, forgetting that without juſtice no laſting pleaſure can belong to us, but that the act that deprives us of the power of doing juſtly, undermines in ſecret the rock on which our future comfort and pleaſures are built.

ESSAY XL.

TO improve houſes and places is, no doubt, an agreeable and deſirable employment, and is of great benefit to many, beſides the individual who is the immediate improver; but when the pleaſure it affords puſhes him beyond the bounds of prudence, and diſables him from anſwering the demands of juſtice, then it ceaſes to be right, and it ceaſes alſo to bring with it amuſement and pleaſure, which was the end at firſt propoſed: for I believe every one who has gone beyond his fortune, and feels the want of money, will allow that the pleaſure of elegance is not a compenſation for the loſs of a command of that which is to anſwer every demand of nature. His folly is felt by himſelf long before it is perceived by others: he is ſenſible the time will come when all that ſee it will ſay, Behold this man began to build, and was not able to finiſh!

finiſh! More will laugh at his folly than pity him, and thoſe who pity him will not be blind to his folly. The pleaſure of being even with the world is ſo great, that, if every day's experience did not convince one to the contrary, one ſhould think the not being ſo could only ariſe from ſome great and unforeſeen misfortune. The labouring under difficulties is ſo very irkſome to the mind, that it poiſons every enjoyment, though not immediately connected with it; but when we are at eaſe with regard to our affairs, we can enjoy with chearfulneſs every bleſſing of life. And better it is to enjoy our little, if little is our lot, with a chearful heart, than to roll in gaudy carriages, to eat of rare diſhes, and ſit in coſtly rooms, without money in our pocket to pay for thoſe luxuries which we ſeem to have. Riches are undoubtedly a deſirable good, and ought to be enjoyed with an open heart and liberal hand; but unleſs the future is a little conſulted, we ſquander away the means of future enjoyment, and lay up, inſtead of comfort for a day of care, care for a day of age. Let each man but do ſo much, and no more, as he would adviſe another to do, and the conſequence will be moſt happy to himſelf. There is no ſentence deſerves more to be reprobated than that in the juſtly admired comedy of the School for Scandal, where Charles

ſays he never could make juſtice keep pace with generoſity, and immediately gives to the one what was due to the other. The ſentiment (if indeed it deſerves the name of one) is too much applauded by the audience: it is a dangerous and deſtructive ſentence, and the more ſo, as generoſity is a warm and bewitching virtue, and ſeems a work of a man's own mind, and not ſimply his duty. But juſtice is in itſelf more truly noble; that plain, true, upright ſentiment of the heart, without which generoſity is like a laced coat over a ragged waiſtcoat. To do juſtice to the trader, or to whomſoever we owe any thing, is the trueſt proof that we enjoy the principle that actuates us to generoſity. *When* the mind can with freedom enjoy acts of generoſity, and refinement in living and elegance of ſituation, then let them be attended to, and the man will ſit down a happy and reſpected being.

ESSAY XLI.

TO inveſtigate too minutely into the cauſes and effects of every event or circumſtance that we meet with, is certainly not neceſſary to happineſs, as we ſee many enjoy it without ever looking

looking farther than the outward appearance: but though moſt from want of inclination, many from want of capacity, and many from want of thought, may ſkim the ſurface, yet there is a pleaſure, and I think it may be allowed there is ſome profit, in diving deeper into nature, and following her in all her various windings and turnings. However, if it will not be allowed to be productive of benefit to others, yet, to the perſon who does inveſtigate cauſes, much pleaſure will certainly accrue, and he is in the wrong, if it be not attended with profit too. It would be ſad, if ſo much working of mind were to end in fruitleſs knowledge, and that the finding of a cauſe from the effect did not turn out to the advantage of the ſearcher in his future conduct of life; but, however delightful and profitable it prove to ſcrutinize and ponder the ways of man, yet great care ſhould be taken, that it neither diſguſt the mind, nor ſour the temper. The end of all reſearches of this ſort ought to be lamenting, not condemning, the follies or foibles of mankind. There will always be failings enough in ourſelves to prevent any compariſon to our advantage; and the more we condemn our own, the more we ſhall excuſe them in others, from a conſciouſneſs, that the very means by which we diſcover them ought to be the means of our getting the better of them, and in the mean

time make us ſenſible that very few ſee things as we have been accuſtomed to do.

There is no company I go into but I ſee each perſon as a different world: no two are alike in manner, in mode of living, or in their opinion upon any, even the moſt common, affairs of life. Great matters, indeed, are ſeldom brought on the carpet; but, if they are, there is uſually as great a variety of opinions as there is of faces: but, not to enter into the diſcourſes of the company, their outward behaviour is ſo various, that it is very curious to obſerve it, and to trace the cauſes of it to its ſource. But I muſt repeat again and again, that this obſervation and inveſtigation ſhould be confined to one's own breaſt, either for private profit or pleaſure, and never uſed to the leaſt diſadvantage of others, either when preſent or when abſent. There is not a more cruel or a more ungenerous manner of acting, than that of ridiculing perſons as ſoon as they have left our company, and bringing thoſe defects to view, which would perhaps have paſſed unnoticed, but for one of the company, who ſets them out, to the amuſement of the reſt, in colours the moſt glaring. Indeed, criticiſm, when uſed to the purpoſe of hurting others, is a talent the moſt undeſirable and baneful to ſociety. But I hope there are ſome whoſe criticiſm cannot offend, who uſe it with ſuch diſcretion,

diſcretion, that no umbrage can be taken at it, but the party himſelf convinced that no offence was meant, even ſhould the ſtrictures unwittingly uttered reach his ear. But, in general, the ſafeſt way is, as I have obſerved, to lock up the obſervations in the breaſt of the owner, and to keep a ſtrict watch over the heart, that they proceed not from ill-nature, ſelf-conceit, or any motive but that of a love of ſpeculation, and letting the mind work its own workings either to its advantage or amuſement.

Indeed, the more minutely we look into the cauſes of actions, the more excuſes we ſhall find for what we think wrong or fooliſh; for the great difference in the mind of every individual is ſuch, that their thoughts and actions cannot be alike. It is a natural thing for one perſon to ſay of another, I wonder he did ſo or ſo, or I wonder he don't do ſo and ſo. To *him* it is a wonder; but to one who ſees that theſe two perſons have not the leaſt reſemblance to one another in their mode of thinking, that their education and manners are quite different, it is not ſurpriſing that they think differently in that point.—Perhaps, indeed, a greater variety of opinions on the leaſt as well as the greateſt matters, and on actions the ſmalleſt as well as greateſt, may be found in a nation of liberty like ours, than in countries where abſolute dominion

minion reduces the inhabitants to a ſmall number of ideas: for liberty of pen and ſpeech will give freedom of thought, and, per contra, being abridged in the ſubjects of both, will contract the mind and prevent its ranging after new ideas; for, unleſs we in ſome way or other expreſs our thoughts, they take no hold on the mind, but die away as faſt as they ariſe; ſo that in time a mind naturally made for ſpeculation, will confine itſelf to matter of fact, and look no further.

There is one advantage which an enquiring mind ſometimes reaps from its obſervations, and that is an equal temper and an equal behaviour; for it is not poſſible for a great diſtinction to be made in our manner towards each other, when we ſee men in the light they really are, and not in borrowed colours. Difference of rank is requiſite for the good of ſociety; but the great would ſoften their grandeur, by being eaſy and gentle in the company of their inferiors, and the little would be without fear in the preſence of their ſuperiors, if each diſtinguiſhed the difference between the articles of rank and riches and man and man. A worthy poor man, and a worthy rich man, claim alike our regard and attention, while the unworthy in both ſhould be treated with the civility indeed due to all mankind as fellow-creatures, but with no more; for he who is not a friend

to

to himſelf, will ſcarce prove one to another. Time, at leaſt, or ſome occaſion which tries his friendſhip in a tender part, will ſhake his integrity who had no ſolid foundation for it: he has looſened all other ties of virtue, and cannot be expected to keep that one unbroken. So equal is the eye of the mind, that it ſees merit in every rank and ſituation of life; and ſo candid are, or ought to be, the opinions which we draw from obſervation, that, in the ſmalleſt degree as well as in the greateſt, we ſhould take care not to offend.

ESSAY XLII.

PHILOSOPHERS and Divines are perpetually recommending it to us, to be content with the portion that is allotted to us. I am not going to deny the uſefulneſs and wiſdom of contentment; but I hope I may, without preſumption, offer to our conſideration another motive to it, not exactly ſimilar to thoſe they uſually aſſign.—Some philoſophers bring their arguments from experience: having been once great, and in their grandeur tormented with jealouſy in their own breaſts, and envy in that of others, they are diſguſted and diſſatisfied; and being tired and ſatiated with pomps

and

and power, they retire to ſome ſerene ſpot, and, having quarrelled with the world, adviſe all mankind to have nothing to do with it, but to be content with their preſent ſituations. Others there are, with leſs prejudice, who, having taken a view of the world, and the different ſtates and conditions of mankind, ſee much evil and few real pleaſures; that a general mixture of happineſs and miſery prevails; and from this ſurvey draw this precept, to be content with the evil you know, and not fly from it to that you know not.—Divines, whoſe arguments muſt of neceſſity be ſtronger, from the ſource from whence they draw them, inſiſt much on the wiſdom of contentment, from the falſe appearances of the things of this world: grandeur and riches do not neceſſarily produce happineſs, and many a gay outſide covers a ſickly heart; that there is little likelihood of getting rid of miſery by a change of ſituation; even among the humbler walks of life, each man has his morn; and that many are greatly more afflicted than ourſelves.

Theſe comparative arguments (if I may be allowed the expreſſion) are, I believe it will be acknowledged, thoſe commonly made uſe of to excite us to content. May I now be permitted to own, that I think it a duty to be attended to ſolely on account of its being one? for if I am contented with my portion only while I believe I ſhould not

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be happier with another, then, when it is proved to me that I could moſt certainly make a good exchange, my contentment muſt be at an end, and I ſhall become reſtleſs and uneaſy :—if I am only ſatisfied and reſigned under misfortunes, becauſe I think mine not greater than others, then, if they become ſo ſevere that I can no longer believe that moſt men are ſo wretched as I am, I muſt become querulous and diſcontented :—if I languiſh for greatneſs and riches as ſoon as I am perſuaded that the poſſeſſion of them would give me pleaſure, I relinquiſh the merit of contentment without them. In the ſame manner muſt all our peace fail us, that ariſes from that virtue, if it takes its riſe only from comparative views of our own ſituation with that of other men, or from our opinions of the things of the world : but when our contentment ariſes from a firm and fixed opinion of the perfect wiſdom which governs the world, and directs the great events in every man's life, then the peace of mind that is brought by content ſo founded, is ſuch as no ſituation can take away, and no event can ſtagger. A man who is ſatisfied with his lot, not becauſe others have not a better, but becauſe he believes it the beſt he could be in, draws from his heart the bitter ſting of envy, and gives it in affliction all the alleviation it can receive.—Nor is contentment only ſuited to the miſerable and the poor ; it is a bleſſ-

a bleſſing intended for all: it teaches the rich to think themſelves rich, and the happy to think themſelves happy: it prevents the pain of diſappointment, for it teaches us to expect nothing more than we have: it gives to every ſituation all the pleaſures it can enjoy, and balm to every wound.—A good man ſtruggling with diſtreſs is an exalted, though an affecting object: his ſubmiſſion to the ſtroke ſmooths his pillow, and lays his head to reſt. A wicked man ſtruggling with affliction has ever been to me a ſhocking ſight: he has no where to reſt; he is forced to drive the thoughts of his troubles from him, as the only means of bearing them. Time indeed blunts the edge of ſorrow, and perhaps will make it forgot; but it is immediately in the moment of trial that it is deſirable to lighten the weight of it. This is certainly to be done, by a perſuaſion, that, locked up in the ſecrets of infinite knowledge, there are reaſons of infinite moment for this trial, and that a time will come when we ſhall know them ourſelves, and own their wiſdom.—But without the exertion of being content in trying hours, the conſtant habit of it in the mind, in the common courſe of our lives, becomes the foundation of chearfulneſs, and is as ſalutary to our health and ſpirits, as it is conducive to our being eſteemed and beloved by others.

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